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THE BOOK OF JOB

INTERPRETED

BY

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"HEBREW IDEALS" "THE CAPTIVITY AND PASTORAL EPISTLES" ETC.

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PREFACE.

I DESIRE to express my gratitude to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press at Oxford and the Syndics of the University Press at Cambridge for their kindness in giving me permission to use the Revised Version as the basis of my interpretation. The responsibility for the text remains with me.

This book being intended not only for scholars, but for general readers who are interested in sacred literature, care has been taken to confine the Hebrew terminology as far as possible within brackets.

The exposition follows a searching analysis of the Massoretic Text in the light of the Ancient Versions. There is need for a new translation, embodying the results of recent criticism, and this I hope to publish separately. Time is required for such delicate work.

In the meanwhile I have fulfilled a cherished purpose by writing this study, which is mainly exegetical, though in part inevitably critical. The Book which I have tried to elucidate is so supremely great, and touches so many of the deepest problems of the modern world, that one would fain draw fresh minds under the spell of its mighty inspiration.

To my friend the Rev. A. P. Davidson, M.A., I am greatly indebted for assistance in the correction of proofs.

J. S.

EDINBURGH, *February* 1913.

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INTRODUCTION.

The Perennial Problem.

THE problem of suffering is the great *enigma vitae*, the solution of which, for ever attempted, may for ever baffle the human mind. Why our planet has been invaded by physical and moral evil; why a God of infinite love and power has ordained or permitted the sufferings of sentient beings; why His 'whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now'; why, in particular, the operation of pain is apparently so indiscriminate that the innocent suffer with the guilty,—these questions are asked in bewilderment to-day, and the facts which evoke them have troubled the spirit of man ever since it began to grope for a meaning and purpose in life. This is the sphinx-riddle of existence; this is the crux of theism. Every age endeavours to throw some fresh glimmer of light on the perennial problem, which ordinarily presents itself to the plain man not as an intellectual puzzle, but as a heart-piercing sorrow or a haunting fear. 'It may be that there are some lives in which pleasure has so far overbalanced pain, that the presence of the latter has never been felt by them as a mystery. . . . But there is another, and, I think, more numerous class to whom their own and others' pain is a daily burden, upon whose heart it weighs with an intolerable anguish.'[1]

Our own age, which brings to the solution of old problems the new light of evolution—the struggle for life, the survival of the fittest, the solidarity of human existence with that of the creation at large—is profoundly conscious of the anomalies of the world regarded as a moral order. Increasing culture has increased its capacity for pain—its sensitiveness, its sympathy,

[1] J. Hinton, *The Mystery of Pain*, 1 f.

its perplexity in the presence of the mystery of evil. It is an age in which the thoughts of many hearts are revealed, and its spirit is frankly critical of the constitution under which we are obliged to live. Logic states its clear, simple, and apparently irrefragable case: 'If the maker of the world *can* all that he will, he wills misery, and there is no escape from the conclusion.'[1] Philosophy regards it as a 'depressing and revolting belief that the destinies of the universe are at the mercy of a being who, with the resources of omnipotence at his disposal, decided to make a universe no better than this.'[2] Science asks 'why among the endless possibilities open to omnipotence—that of sinless happy existence among the rest—the actuality in which sin and misery abound should be selected.'[3] Poetry is constrained to ask:

> 'Wherefore should any evil hap to man—
> From ache of flesh to agony of soul—
> Since God's All-mercy mates All-potency?
> Nay, why permits He evil to Himself—
> Man's sin, accounted such? Suppose a world
> Purged of all pain, with fit inhabitant—
> Man pure of evil in thought, word, and deed—
> Were it not well? Then, wherefore otherwise?'[4]

And the Christian preacher has to confess that 'to consider the world in its length and breadth . . . the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, . . . that condition of the whole race, so fearfully yet exactly described in the apostle's words, "having no hope and without God in the world"—all this is a vision to dizzy and appal, and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery which is absolutely beyond human solution.'[5]

In a study of Robert Browning, Professor Jones remarks that 'there is nothing more admirable in his attitude, or more inspiring in his teaching, than the manly frankness with which he endeavours to confront the manifold miseries of human life, and to constrain them to yield, as their ultimate meaning and reality, some spark

[1] J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion* (pop. ed.), p. 21.
[2] J. M. E. McTaggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, 220.
[3] T. Huxley, *Romanes Lecture.* [4] R. Browning, *Mihrab Shah.*
[5] J. H. Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, 242.

of good.'[1] If Faith is to secure and retain the allegiance of the modern mind, it must somehow come to terms with the enigma of suffering, and be able, if not to explain it, at least to render it tolerable. No problem is more worthy of mental toil. Grant that human reason can never wholly solve it, that clouds and darkness must ever be round about it, yet even to state it correctly is no small help, while to discuss it, to offer tentative and partial solutions of it, may place the intelligence in a position of superiority to it.

Happily no new age has to wrestle with the mystery as if it had never been attacked before. Many bewildered sufferers have asked ere now how divine goodness can be compatible with the existence of pain, and have sought, not all in vain, to answer their own question. Two Hebrew writers of supreme intellectual and spiritual power, living in much the same historical conditions if not exactly in the same time and place, offered solutions which can never be ignored. Each of them presented a pathetic picture of a suffering Servant of the Lord, and each of them interpreted the spectacle. Daring to believe that pain may be something differing *toto caelo* from penalty, they directed the human mind into new channels of thought, the one by teaching that innocent suffering is the trial of the righteous, the other by representing it as the atonement of the guiltless for the guilty. They spoke with an authority inspired in a measure by the grandeur of the truths they felt themselves commissioned to proclaim, and, though their very names are unknown, the poetry in which they gave impassioned and rapturous utterance to their convictions is unique in the literature of the world. Some of their words of consolation have been worthily wedded to deathless music — 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God'; 'He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief'; 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'

The Historical Background.

Pervaded by the thought and feeling of a period in some ways singularly resembling our own, the Book of Job is the

[1] *Browning as a Philosopher and Religious Teacher*, 231.

most modern of all Hebrew writings, though some readers [1] may naturally find themselves more at home in Ecclesiastes. The post-exilic age which produced the great drama of spiritual doubt transcended by faith was, on the one hand, heavily oppressed by that increase of knowledge which brings increase of sorrow; and it is doubtless true that 'when the Semitic skin of Job is scratched, we find a modern pessimist beneath.' [2] But the age felt, on the other hand, that its richer culture and its wider outlook only constituted a fresh call to realise the union of the spiritual and eternal with its manifestation in time. The greatest thinkers of the period sought to conquer its pessimism with a higher, nobler, purer faith. Perceiving that the God of history was breaking with the past only to fulfil Himself in new and more wondrous ways, they endeavoured to enlighten the bewildered mind and establish the wavering faith of their nation by guiding it into a deeper knowledge of His will and a closer fellowship with Himself. Spiritual revolutions, however, are never effected without pain. 'Periods of religious transition, when the advance has been a real one, always have been violent, and probably will always continue to be so. They to whom the precious gift of fresh light is given are called upon to exhibit their credentials as teachers in suffering for it. They, and those who oppose them, have alike a sacred cause; and the fearful spectacle arises of earnest vehement men contending against each other as for their own souls, in fiery struggle; . . . and, at last, the old faith, like the phœnix, expires upon the altar, and the new rises out of the ashes.' [3]

In the Book of Job nothing less than a campaign of centuries is dramatically compressed into a single decisive battle. The Israelites of the pre-exilic time, mastered by a mighty monotheism that had not yet reached the stage of enlightenment at which the origin and existence of evil become an urgent speculative problem, have a facile explanation of all sufferings. To them, as their scriptures mirror their minds to us, there is no mystery of pain. God being all in all, and every event, morally or materially hurtful as well as beneficial, being traced to His

[1] *e.g.* Renan, whose translation of Job is remarkably fine, but who finds *Koheleth* 'le seul livre aimable qui ait été composé par un Juif.'

[2] A. B. Davidson, *EBr*, art. 'Job.' [3] Froude, 289 f.

immediate action,[1] He rules the affairs of men with a justice so rigid and exact that it is always well with the righteous and ill with the wicked. The divine government accomplishes that which the best human government can only attempt—it rewards the deserving and punishes the guilty. The causal nexus between goodness and prosperity, sin and suffering, is never broken. Health, wealth, peace, comfort, long life are the lot of the true servants of God; sickness, poverty, trouble, disaster, early death the portion of the wicked. One's outward condition is always tell-tale, success being the indication of God's favour, failure of His anger. Accident and partiality are alike unknown. Famine, earthquake, pestilence, defeat in war are the punishment of sin; abundance of corn, wine, and oil, a peaceful home, and a numerous progeny, the reward of righteousness. In the field of destiny, which is this earth, men reap what they have sown. No light of immortality has yet been shed upon human lives; there is no judgment in Sheol, where all things are alike to all. The present life, rounded and complete in itself, alone counts for anything, and between the cradle and the grave men receive what they merit. A man's life and his lot in life *must* correspond, otherwise God would be unjust.

There can be no doubt that the doctrine of retributive justice is clearly and emphatically taught by all the early prophets, whose religious subject, however, is not the individual Israelite, but the nation Israel. According to them, every event is a revelation of God's righteousness. The physical has no meaning in itself; it is nothing but a medium for the display of the moral. God deals with His people by an unchanging, calculable law, and His external treatment of them manifests His real attitude towards them. The righteous nation is always exalted, the wicked always cast down. The equation between conduct and lot is perfect, the balance of justice so true that it needs no redress in an after-life. The course of events is God's adequate self-expression, His providence made visible. The early prophetic faith might be expressed in Schiller's words, *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*, 'The history of the world is the judgment of the world.'

From the time of Josiah the doctrine of retributive righteous-

[1] Cf. Schultz, *OT Theology*, ii. 270.

ness was embodied for Israel in the Book of Deuteronomy, which was the practical outcome of a strenuous endeavour to apply prophetic ideas to life. 'Do well and fare well' is the burden of all the exhortations of the ideal legislator who speaks in the divine name. 'Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; the blessing if ye shall hearken unto the commandments of Jahweh your God, which I command you this day: and the curse if ye shall not hearken unto the commandments of Jahweh your God (Dt 11^{26-28}; cf. 11^{13-15} 28).

The sunny creed which connected unbroken earthly happiness with religious fidelity was a relic of Israel's golden age. It was the faith of a strong, hardy, youthful race, which had, by the blessing of its God, triumphed in the struggle for life. But it was evidently exposed to some grave objections. First, so long as good conduct was the surest passport to divine favour and worldly success, the natural accompaniment of religion was a frankly utilitarian morality. If the basis of God's relations with His people was a covenant, in which He promised that upright living would be recompensed by temporal prosperity, virtue was practised for the sake of the results, and men felt that they had the right to remonstrate if ever the reward of their good deeds was withheld. A second objection is still more serious. If prosperity was regarded as the evidence of God's favour, it is apparent that religion was still the possession of the rich, the free, the healthy, the happy, while it had no message for the poor, the broken, the defeated, the wretched. 'So long as the community flourished, the fact that an individual was miserable reflected no discredit on divine providence, but was rather taken to prove that the sufferer was an evil-doer. . . . Such a man was out of place among the happy and prosperous crowd that assembled on feast days before the altar; . . . the unhappy leper, in his lifelong affliction, was shut out from the exercises of religion as well as from the privileges of social life. So the mourner, too, was unclean, and his food was unclean, as his food was not brought into the house of God; the very occasions of life in which spiritual things are nearest to the Christian, and the comfort of religion is most fervently sought, were in the ancient world the times when a man was forbidden to approach the seat of God's presence. To us, whose habit it is to look at religion in its

influence on the life and habits of individuals, it seems a cruel law; nay, our sense of justice is offended by a system in which misfortunes set up a barrier between a man and his God. But whether in civil or in profane matters, the habit of the old world was to think much of the community and little of the individual life; and no one felt this to be unjust even though it bore hardly on himself.'[1]

It is certain that the Prophetic and Deuteronomic faith in the success of righteousness, containing as it did a large element of truth, took a firm hold of the national consciousness, as is proved by the fact that it became the burden of many of the Psalms and of the whole Book of Proverbs, as well as the perpetually recurrent moral of all the Hebrew histories. Orthodoxy teaches that the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord 'shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water . . . and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper' (Ps 1^{3}). 'I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread' (Ps 37^{25}). 'Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: how much more the wicked and the sinner!' (Pr 11^{31}).

Yet long before these confident words of poets and sages were written, the decline and fall of the State of Judah began to evoke the first murmurs of dissent from the traditional creed. The times were out of joint, and the victories of the heathen sorely tried the faith of the people of God. Brave, loyal, heroic men suffered manifoldly and tragically. The accepted theology appeared to be in violent conflict with facts; God's doings could not be harmonised with His attributes; He seemed to have broken His covenant, to be unfaithful to His promises, untrue to Himself. Men brooded on these mysteries till their faith shook and their reason almost reeled.

The Hebrew prophets themselves—God's confidants, sensitive to every whisper of His spirit, every leading of His providence—were the first Hebrew sceptics. Their doubt was faith perplexed, faith tried, faith bewildered, faith tortured. The strength and purity of their progressive ethical monotheism constrained them to ask questions, to expostulate with God, to complain in the anguish of their hearts. Their very faith

[1] W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*[2], 259.

became a cruel problem, a well-nigh intolerable burden. They could not shut their eyes to the moral confusion of the world, and the mysterious silence, the apparent indifference, of God appalled them. 'Righteous art Thou, O Jahweh,' says one of them, 'when I plead with Thee: yet would I reason the cause with Thee: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they at ease that deal very treacherously?' (Jer 12^{1}). 'Wherefore,' cries another, 'lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, and hidest Thy face when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than he?' (Hab 1^{13}). And in the long centuries of misrule that follow the destruction of the Jewish State, plaintive voices become more and more common: 'Thou hast cast off and rejected, Thou hast been wroth with Thine anointed. . . . O Jahweh, where are Thy former mercies, which Thou swarest unto David in Thy faithfulness?' (Ps $89^{38.\ 49}$).

An old and consecrated dogma never lacks defenders, and many attempts were still made to buttress the traditional belief which connected all suffering with sin. If it could not be denied that ideal justice, which theoretically rewarded the righteous and punished the wicked, was in practice often painfully impartial, it was maintained that in the end the balance was always adjusted. In Psalms 37, 49, and 73, where the difficulty is felt, relief is sought in the idea that occasional aberrations from the ordinary course of providence are not permanent; that before the close of life, well-doers and evil-doers alike receive their due reward, while the righteous see it and are glad, their faith being thereby re-established. Yet such a theodicy was felt by many to be unsatisfying, for the simple reason that it was not true. And thus the intellect of the nation, enlarged and enlightened by observation and experience, came into sharp conflict with the devotional spirit of religious acquiescence. There was no possibility of theological progress on the old lines, for it had become abundantly evident that God *does* require the innocent to suffer with the guilty. At such a crisis there was no possibility of standing still; not to go forward was to go backward. If faith was afraid to face the facts of life, faith must perish.

But in the days of storm and stress a new era begins. One seer after another arose in Israel, not to defend the ancient

tradition, but to offer a new solution of the mystery of suffering. The greatest of these was the unknown prophet of the Exile, and after him came the author of the Book of Job. Absolutely convinced that the simple creed of the nation's childhood was inadequate for its manhood, they felt themselves constrained to render to their people that greatest of all services—the purifying and ennobling of its spiritual faith.

The Argument.

The writer of the Book of Job is a born dramatist. It is of the essence of his active mind to recognise and state all the arguments which make for and against the conclusion which he himself has reached; and he finds a rudimentary form of dramatic art the fittest medium for a full and adequate discussion of the burning question of his age. Out of the rich store of the nation's legends he chooses the case of a blameless, upright, God-fearing sheikh, the greatest of the sons of the East, who was suddenly cast from the height of prosperity to the lowest depth of misery. Stripped of his wealth, bereft of his family, struck down with a loathsome disease, doomed to an early and painful death, regarded as a common criminal by those near and dear to him, this man presents an absolute contradiction to the ideal union of moral rectitude and worldly happiness. By means of a daring prologue in Heaven, the poet claims the divine sanction for his own view that the suffering of the righteous man is not the punishment of sin but the trial of faith. Job himself, though ignorant of this aspect of the case, at first bears his unparalleled misfortunes with exemplary patience; but, having been educated in the old faith, and necessarily regarding the calamities which have overtaken him as signs of God's anger, he is gradually forced to the agonising conclusion that God is unjust.

Job's three friends represent religious society and its verdicts. So long as they dare to trust their instincts, they are kind and gentle, but their sympathy is soon chilled by their creed. Holding the old dogma of retribution, not, like the early prophets, in its national aspect, but, like Ezekiel (ch. 18), in its individual bearing, they apply their grim tenet to their friend with an ever-increasing rigour and vigour. The poet gives them full scope,

and uses all the resources of his genius in stating the old doctrine which he wishes to discredit. He does not forget that he belongs to a nation which has cherished that theory for centuries as an orthodox belief. Eliphaz the seer, Bildad the traditionalist, Zophar the ordinary zealot, have all of them great thoughts of the absolute power, the perfect wisdom, the ideal justice of God. They contend that they are striving to keep the nation's sacred heritage pure and intact. What they do not see is that the new conditions in which they live imperatively demand a modification of the nation's faith. Their fundamental error is that they refuse to admit patent facts, and it is the fruitful cause of others. Constituting themselves special pleaders on behalf of God, they become so enmeshed in scholastic jargon that they cease to be conscious of the poignant realities with which they trifle. They sacrifice their friend to their creed. *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.* 'Of all the cruelty inflicted in the name of orthodoxy there is little that can surpass the refined torture due to this Jewish apologetic. Its cynical teaching met the sufferer in the anguish of bereavement, in the pain and depression of disease, when he was crushed by sudden and ruinous losses. . . . Instead of receiving sympathy and help, he found himself looked upon as a moral outcast and pariah on account of his misfortunes; when he most needed divine grace, he was bidden to regard himself as a special object of the wrath of Jehovah. If his orthodoxy survived his calamities, he would review his past life with morbid retrospection, and persuade himself that he had indeed been guilty above all other sinners.'[1]

Job is thus placed in an extraordinary dilemma. If the old doctrine of retribution is true—and he cannot yet doubt that it is—his good conscience is incompatible with the goodness of God, and he must sacrifice the one or the other. If, on the one hand, he trusts his moral sense, he is driven to distrust God; and if, on the other, he trusts God and his creed, he is compelled to deny his own integrity. In the awful conflict which becomes inevitable, will his creed or his conscience win the day?

Job is true to himself. His consciousness of his own innocence is clearer to him than the justice of God. He opposes his moral sense to the verdict of his friends, the

[1] W. H. Bennett, *The Book of Chronicles*, 362 f.

judgment of society, the traditions of his race. He is not, like Athanasius, alone with God against the world; he is in the more tragic position of being alone against God and the world.

It is evidently one of the main purposes of the poet to assert the moral rights of personality. He realises two things with equal sureness—the meanness and the dignity of man. Job knows that he is but a driven leaf, a thing of nought, petty, ephemeral, infinitely to be pitied. But he knows also that he is a moral being; and, as he cannot deny his primal certainties, he vindicates his rights against wanton infringements not only at the hands of man, but also at the hands of a despotic God. He does not for a moment assert that he is sinless (7^{22} 13^{26} $14^{16f.}$), but he knows that he has committed none of the crimes of which he is suspected, and no argument can induce him to declare himself guilty against his better knowledge. Omnipotence may crush him in an instant, but cannot compel him to violate his conscience. In reading the Book of Job one is constantly reminded of Pascal's words: 'L'homme n'est qu'un roseau, le plus faible de la nature, mais c'est un roseau pensant. Il ne faut que l'Univers entier s'arme pour l'écraser. Une vapeur, une goute d'eau, suffit pour le tuer. Mais quand l'Univers l'écraserait, l'homme serait encore plus noble que ce qui le tue, parce qu'il sait qu'il meurt, et l'avantage que l'Univers a sur lui. L'Univers n'en sait rien.'[1] Job's friends have a kind of fanatical belief in the greatness of God and the worthlessness of man. The former doctrine Job accepts, but his words are an eternal protest against the latter. The spirit of man asserts the absolute character of its highest convictions against any array of external reasons. 'It was a momentous step when the soul in its relations to God ventured to take its stand upon itself, to trust itself.'[2] 'The doctrine of man's dignity receives in the person of Job its noblest exposition in all ancient literature.'[3]

It is Job's loyalty to his moral nature that leads him to a higher faith—to the belief in a God who owns the moral claims of the creature upon the Creator. So long as he doubts whether God is infinitely good as well as great, he is in spiritual darkness.

[1] *Pensées*, ed. Molinier, i. 70 (spelling modernised).
[2] Wellhausen, *Hist. of Israel*, 505.
[3] R. H. Charles, *Crit. Hist. of the Doct. of a Future Life*, 68.

If God is to be judged by the outward phenomena which seem to be the expression of His mind, His rule must be accounted the régime of an omnipotent despot whose arbitrary will is the sole moral law. But against such a conception Job's whole being triumphantly asserts itself. The God for whom his heart yearns, the God of righteousness and love, must be the true God. He *knows* that above all the dark things of earth such a God lives, that He is the Witness of his innocence, and that He will one day be his Vindicator. Though indisputable facts point to an awful God who has become his Enemy, his heart assures him of a gracious God who is his Friend and has never ceased to love him. And the strangest thing in the drama is his appeal to the God of Heaven against the God of earth. The antinomy indicates that he is groping after a higher conception of God. All his wild words, in some of which he comes perilously near to anathematising God, are directed against a pitiless and undiscriminating Force. And his new faith, which is not fabricated in the schools of logic, but forged in the furnace of affliction, is faith in a God who loves and can be loved.

In nothing is the Book of Job more modern than in its impressive protest against absolutism in theology, its plea for a reasonable service based upon the moral affinity and the mutual understanding of God and man. Is humanity to worship an Almighty Being, though His justice may not be as human justice, nor His mercy as the mercy of man, who may, in fact, for aught we know, be a despotic and revengeful Tyrant? Job's friends said 'Yes,' and therefore he regarded them as sycophants, trembling worshippers of might instead of right, cowards cringing before the unknown Cause of all things, good and bad alike, in nature and in providence. Before such a Deity of absolute power, who did not realise his moral ideal, Job steadily refused to bow. When Hamilton and Mansel unwittingly revived in Britain the doctrine of Job's friends, it was Stuart Mill who repeated, in different language, Job's fiery protest: 'I will call no being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go.'[1] But if the theo-

[1] *Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy*, 103; cf. *Autobiography*, 275.

logical difficulties of the ancient East and the modern West are essentially the same, the heart's intuitions are also everywhere alike, and 'in the person of Job the poet struggles towards the only conception of God which has hope for the universe.'[1] At the altar of that God the East and the West will meet.

There is yet another possible solution of the enigma of suffering innocence; and when Job is at the height of his great argument, he catches a glimpse of it. His theology is charged with white-hot emotion, and emits lightning flashes of prophecy. As if it were not enough to dispute with men, he dares to face that 'strange hero—Θάνατος.' It is one of the presuppositions of the drama that this world is the only field in which divine justice is exercised, and there is at first no suggestion that the wrongs of the present may be righted in an after-life. But when it becomes apparent to Job that he can never get justice in this world, his mind leaps instinctively to the thought of a posthumous vindication. From the depth of despair he suddenly rises to grapple with the last enemy, to put his foot on the neck of Death. For at least one supreme moment he stands convinced that as a disembodied spirit he will be recalled from Sheol to hear himself justified and to see his Vindicator. It is true that what he expects is not immortality, but simply a favourable verdict which he will be summoned to receive after death. Seed-thoughts, however, grow, and one man's germinal faith—'apart from my flesh shall I see God'—may ultimately become all mankind's invincible hope of eternal life in the presence of God.

The Divine Speech.

In his perplexity Job again and again expresses the passionate desire to come before God, to plead his cause, and to hear the explanation of his sufferings. He is confident that if God will speak, it will not be to condemn but to justify him. At length he is in a measure gratified. The divine speech (rather than speeches, see p. 26) from the whirlwind is at once the crowning audacity and the literary glory of the poem. 'It transcends all other descriptions of the wonders of creation or the greatness

[1] A. M. Fairbairn, *The City of God*, 182.

of the Creator which are to be found either in the Bible or elsewhere.'[1] One may admit that in a sense it is disappointing. It does not account for Job's afflictions, and it throws little fresh light upon the moral anomalies of the divine government of the world. It certainly does not explain the ultimate mysteries; it leaves the universe still (in Carlyle's ironical phrase) 'a little abstruse.' But it admirably serves the poet's purpose of bringing his hero back to a sane and true conception of the character of God. If it does not answer the questions raised by the inquisitive intellect, it satisfies the hungering heart. It turns Job's brooding mind from the problem of evil to the problem of good. It plies him with humbling interrogations as to his knowledge of the infinite resources of the Divine Mind. It suggests to him that He who lavishes so much thoughtfulness and kindness upon inanimate and animate nature, cares still more for man. It uses the argument of Isaiah, 'Lift up your eyes on high, and see: who hath created these? . . . He giveth power to the faint' (Is $40^{26.\ 29}$), and of the Sermon on the Mount, 'Behold the birds of the heaven. . . . Consider the lilies, . . . shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?' (Mt $6^{26.\ 28.\ 30}$).

The searching but none the less tender irony of the speech has often been strangely misunderstood. Renan thinks that it simply 'crushes the pride of the man who pretends to understand anything of the works of God.'[2] Professor Cornill, who holds that the true solution of the problem of the poem is found in the speeches of Elihu, says that in the divine speeches not the slightest attempt is made to refute or persuade Job, 'but with an unparalleled brutality, which is usually palliated and styled divine irony, but which, under such circumstances and conditions, should much rather be termed devilish scorn (*teuflischer Hohn*), his mouth is simply stopped.'[3] In that case the poet, as Duhm[4] observes, proves himself to be an entirely incapable thinker. The genius of Ewald long ago divined the real meaning of the great utterance. 'The most suitable manner for these divine speeches is that of irony, which combines with concealed severity and calm superiority the effective and benevolent incisiveness

[1] Driver, *LOT*, 402.
[2] *Hist. of the People of Israel*, iii. 69.
[3] *Einleitung in das AT*[2], 232.
[4] *The New World*, 1894, p. 343.

of a higher insight that is used in bright sportiveness, a manner of speech which shows, without wounding or crushing, clearly and tellingly the disproportion of the human in its one-sidedness to the truly divine, of the clouded human understanding to the clear, complete wisdom, of powerless human defiance to true power. If the perfectly divine reveals itself in opposition to the limited and human, it is always like an involuntary irony in relation to the latter, even when it punishes and destroys: but in this case there is also a condescension which is really in its inmost nature of the most gracious character.'[1] The hero is not in the end overwhelmed by the poet with diabolical scorn; like Gerontius, he is 'consumed, yet quickened, by the glance of God.' 'He humbles himself in the very dust; not, however, with painful resignation, but in the elevating assurance that God has acknowledged him, and that he must regard all the elements of his lot as evidence of an all-wise and loving will.'[2]

The National Significance.

The Book of Job was a great teacher's appeal to the heart of the Hebrew-speaking race in an age of transition, and in the measure in which its teachings were received it clarified the nation's theology, theodicy, and morality. (i.) In a period of intellectual unrest the faith of many Jews apparently reduced itself to a belief in a vague inscrutable Power, sublime, inaccessible, unfeeling, not to say blundering, on which they hesitated to bestow the ancient name of Israel's God. If the poet himself was for a time bound and cramped by such a conception, his spirit was ultimately liberated, and his message to his nation is, that by fidelity to its moral ideals it will recover the vision of a living personal God, the Witness and Vindicator of righteousness, the Light of those who seek Him, the Strength of those who find Him. Given such a conception of God, it matters little by what name He is called. The modern mind is tempted to depersonalise God, preferring 'the Divine' (*τὸ θεῖον*), 'the something not ourselves that makes for righteousness,' to the eternally righteous Ego, who, having given us minds to know Him and hearts to love Him, reveals Himself that He may

[1] *The Book of Job*, 294 f. [2] Kautzsch, Hastings' *DB* v. 731.

satisfy the instincts He has created. Renan thinks that what the writer of Job, who 'displayed great freedom of thought,' still needed to learn was, that 'no special will governs the world, and that what happens is the result of a blind effort tending upon the whole toward good.'[1] It is a pity that the supreme Hebrew master of irony could not have replied to the patronising savant. He would probably have numbered him among Job's 'tormenting comforters.' At any rate, he would not have worshipped a Blind Effort. 'Dark as the problem of evil is, it would be immeasurably darker if we were compelled to believe that there is no infinite Righteousness and Love behind, from which a solution of the problem may ultimately be hoped for.'[2]

(ii.) The writer sought to purify Israel's theodicy. If he could deliver the national conscience from its age-long obsession by the belief that all pains are penalties, all afflictions evidences of the wrath of Heaven,—if he could prevent the massing of sin and suffering together as one complex blot upon human life, and so prepare for a higher conception of the meaning of sorrow,—he felt that he would not have lived in vain. If he could portray a Servant of God, perfect, upright, eschewing evil, and yet enduring unparalleled sufferings, what might not the next development in the nation's religion be? Of that the writer could probably have no presentiment, and doubtless he thought it enough if he lived his own life and did his own work well. But he builded better than he knew. Job's (and Israel's) forlorn doubt—the maze, the struggle, the labour, the anguish of it all—formed a true *praeparatio evangelica*. 'If the Jew was to accept a Messiah who was to lead a life of sorrow and abasement, and to be crucified between thieves, it was necessary that it should be somewhere or other distinctly taught that virtue was not always rewarded here, and that therefore no argument could be drawn from affliction and ignominy against the person who suffered it.'[3]

(iii.) The poet endeavoured to refine his nation's ethics. In days of oppression and dishonour there were doubtless many Jews who impatiently asked, 'Must we serve God for nought?' And if not a few of them proved unfaithful, the cynical world

[1] *Hist. of the People of Israel*, iii. 72.
[2] J. Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, 194 f.
[3] J. B. Mozley, *Essays*, ii. 227.

thought it only natural. But the writer of Job dramatically rallies his people to a purer faith and a nobler morality. He commends that service of God which is not synonymous with prudence, expedience, utility, enlightened self-interest; which is rendered not merely in cheerful and happy times, but in the darkest and dreariest hours. He has discovered that man's love of God is of the higher, diviner order, not when life is smooth and prosperous, but when it is full of sorrow and strife. 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' asks the cynic; 'touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce Thee to Thy face.' But it is the cynic who is disillusioned. And the poet's appeal to his people is, Let your faith rise in eternal refutation of the cynicism which would kill the soul of a nation. Nowhere is the poem more modern than here. Paley defined virtue as 'the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness.' Substitute 'lifelong' for 'everlasting,' and this is the Satan's definition. No greater service can be rendered to a nation than the displacement of utilitarian by ideal ethics. 'Schemes of conduct grounded on calculations of self-interest . . . do not belong to Moral Science, to which, both in kind and purpose, they are in all cases *foreign* and, when substituted for it, *hostile*.'[1] To love and serve God for His own sake, as man's moral and spiritual Ideal, and thereby to quench the accusing spirit of sceptical cynicism, are the principles of action which are inculcated in the Book of Job, and there are none higher. They are the principles which made the Hebrews, with all their faults, the foremost nation in history, and they are the principles which make nations great to-day. 'A people cannot be regenerated by teaching them the worship of enjoyment; they cannot be taught a spirit of sacrifice by speaking to them of material rewards. It is the soul which creates to itself a body; the idea which makes for itself a habitation. . . . Say to men, *Come, suffer; you will hunger and thirst; you will, perhaps, be deceived, be betrayed, cursed; but you have a great duty to accomplish*: they will be deaf, perhaps, for a long time, to the severe voice of virtue; but on the day that they do come to you, they will come as heroes, and be invincible.'[2]

[1] Coleridge, in Seth's *English Philosophers*, 326.
[2] Mazzini, *Essays* (Camelot series), 289 f.

The Date of the Poem.

In addition to the fact that the Book of Job was evidently written in and for an age of reflection and doubt, many things point to the latter part of the Persian domination, if not to the beginning of the Greek period, as the time in which it was composed. The archaic colour of the prose sections, the use of the ancient divine names (*El*, *Eloah*, *Shaddai*), the mention of an ancient piece of money (*Kesîtah*) and of the old burnt-offering (*'ōlāh*), merely indicate that the writer was an artist. The poem is the noblest fruit of the Hebrew wisdom or philosophy, which was a post-exilic growth. The bare idea of sages convening to discuss the divine government of the world suggests an age of ripe culture. Many minds had revolved the problems of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate before Job and his friends could deal with them in so elaborate and masterly a fashion. The drama 'presupposes a high spiritual development and a maturity of judgment which are acquired by a people only after great trials and sore tribulations.'[1] Froude regards the poem as the result of 'the *first* fierce collision of the new fact with the old formula which will not stretch to cover it,'[2] but it is probable that the problem of suffering had been exercising the minds and sharpening the wits of two opposing parties ever since the fall of the Holy City. The pure monotheism of the poem and the absence from it of any polemic against heathenism, are signs of an advanced religious development. The genial appreciation of Nature which distinguishes the Second Isaiah is even more apparent in the writer of Job. The remarkable inwardness of his ethics (particularly in ch. 31) suggests a time subsequent to Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant. The studied avoidance of the divine name Jahweh in the Dialogues may mark an era in which 'doubters have been so staggered in their faith in Israel's living God, that they decline to use the revealed name.'[3] The hero of the poem speaks as a cosmopolitan, who has become familiar with the life and thought of other peoples, either by travelling extensively himself, or by conversing frequently with those who 'go by the way' (21^{29}).

[1] Siegfried, *Jew. Encyc.*, 'Job.'
[2] *Short Studies*, i. 290.
[3] Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 72.

The writer's references to pledges (22^6 24^9), to vows (22^{27}), to landmarks (24^2), to proceedings against adulterers ($31^{9\text{-}11}$), betray some knowledge of the Deuteronomic Law. The worship of the sun and moon ($31^{26\text{-}28}$) was introduced into Judaea in the reign of Manasseh. Eliphaz talks regretfully of the time when the religion of the land was still untainted by alien influences, and he evidently has in view the Assyrian invasion and the influx of foreign ideas which from that time continued to modify Israel's ancient faith. Such passages as $12^{17f.}$ 15^{19}, which speak of nations overthrown, kings, priests, and princes led into exile, presuppose the Captivity. It is highly probable that the poet who makes Job curse his day (3^1) was familiar with Jer $20^{14.\ 15}$, and Job 7^{17} is a remarkable parody of Ps 8^5. The idea of personified Wisdom is more fully developed in Job 28 than in Pr 8. The angelology of the poem is post-exilic. One of the strongest evidences of the lateness of Job is the Aramaic and Arabic flavour of its diction. Some passages in the prophecy of Malachi (especially 2^{17} 3^{14}) are singularly suggestive of Job, and it is possible that the writers of the two books were nearly contemporaries. Malachi delivered his message about 450 B.C. Professor Bennett notes that the Chronicler, who lived a century and a half later, tells the story of the kings of Judah in such a way that it becomes a polemic against the Book of Job.[1]

The relation of the drama to the wonderful series of lyric poems inserted in the Second Isaiah, and especially to ch. 53, is a point of great interest. While suffering innocence is in both cases the central theme, the one poet is concerned with its national significance, the other with its personal; and, as the nation's interests were historically recognised before those of the individual, it is probable that the author of Job was the later of the two writers. He evidently knew the work of his predecessor (compare Job 16^{17} with Is 53^9), and may well have believed that Israel was vicariously suffering for the nations; but he does not apply this luminous conception to the trials of Job, in which the element of atoning sacrifice does not lie on the surface.

[1] *The Books of Chronicles*, 363.

The Writer of the Poem.

The poet is known solely from his poem, which is, in a broad sense, a reflex of his mind, a transcript from his life. The Book of Job is autobiographical as the *Divine Comedy*, *Hamlet*, or *Faust* is such. The supreme power of the hero's own speeches, as compared with those of the other human *dramatis personae*, is due to the fact that they are the expression of the writer's personal convictions. '*Er hat seine Dichtung mit seinem Herzblut geschrieben.*'[1] His character has that union of simplicity and complexity which is seen in many great personalities. He is a true Jew, as every page of his writing proves, but a Jew who has so transcended the limits of national particularism, that he lays the scene of his drama not in Judaea but in Idumaea. He is a great humanist, but he resembles the prophets of his race in his high and imperious standard of right, his flaming hatred of wrong. His expanding opinions only intensify his moral sense. His strenuous thinking is no less remarkable than his consummate literary art. He has known the anguish of scepticism, but he has finally reached certain steadfast convictions which constitute his message to his age. He has seen that life is too large for his creed, and discovered the central falsity of the popular faith; but he has found rest in deeper fellowship with God. Like the Second Isaiah, he seeks to cure the murmuring spirits of his time by giving them larger views of external nature as a revelation not only of the might and majesty, but of the loving-kindness of God. He gazes with a childlike wonder at all the glory and pageantry of earth, in which he finds not only pleasures for the eye, but revelations for the soul. As befits a matchless interpreter of Nature, he feels the restraints of civilisation somewhat irksome, and he has often seen the rain fall and the flowers bloom in a land 'where no man is' ($38^{26.27}$). His sympathy with wild freedom is evident, and his pictures of the beautiful untamable creatures of the desert are inimitable. Under the Syrian skies he has sometimes been tempted to worship 'the moon walking in brightness,' and listened as if he might hear the music of the spheres. If his knowledge of society and of history has made him a doubter, his com-

[1] Duhm, *Hiob*, p. ix.

munion with Nature, his reading of earth, has restored his faith.

> 'I found Him in the shining of the stars,
> I mark'd Him in the flowering of the fields,
> But in His ways with men I found Him not,'

he may, like Arthur, at one time have said; but ultimately he came, if not to find, at least implicitly to trust, God's ways with men. His teaching, as it has come down to us, has some limitations, and we do not know how much he may have written in addition to the Jobeid. The very breadth of his view perhaps prevented him from sufficiently appreciating certain elements in Israel's distinctive message. One of the warmest admirers of the drama thinks that 'the theodicy which the poet attempted in chs. 20–39 does not give an entirely satisfactory result, because it leads to Nature instead of the spiritual prospect of the Prophets'; but the same writer adds—and it is praise enough —that 'in himself he overcame the sorrows of this life, and helped to prepare the way for Christianity.'[1]

The Art of the Poem.

The Prologue and Epilogue, which are in prose, contain in outline an epic tale of fallen greatness, which the poet uses as the dramatists of Greece used the ancient legends of their country. Based on this story of primeval sorrows, the poem is in the deepest sense real and true, though the reader is not meant to take either the epic or the dramatic part of it as historical fact. 'The stamp of poetry is visible upon all parts of the book; . . . the celestial scene in the Prologue can scarcely be taken in a literal sense; the symbolical numbers 3 and 7 predominate in Job's possessions before his misfortunes; the interview between Job and his friends is carried on with too great regularity . . . to be strictly historical. . . . The appearance of Jehovah could not be a literal fact; in the picture of the prosperity of Job after his misfortunes, there occur only the same, or multiples of the same, figures as in the Prologue. . . . True history does not move with such regularity.'[2]

[1] Duhm, *The New World*, 1894, p. 344. [2] Godet, *OT Studies*, 193 f.

Theodore of Mopsuestia was censured by the Council of Constantinople for calling the book a drama; but he was doubtless essentially right. The plot is as thrilling as it is simple, and all the sons of God seem to wait in breathless suspense for the issue of a trial which involves the eternal honour of the human race. The *dramatis personae* are clearly conceived and their characters duly sustained, and in the course of the Dialogues the relation of the three friends to the central figure undergoes a perceptible change. The chief advantage of the dramatic form is that it lets the subject-matter be viewed in a variety of aspects, and, in particular, that it enables 'a suffering saint to say the worst things about God which can enter into the minds of good men in their hours of darkness and temptation.'[1] Since it is not so much in the development of a problem as in the history of a soul, torn by conflicting desires, swayed by alternate hopes and fears, alienated from God by doubt and drawn to Him by love, that the supreme interest lies, the book may be called a psychological drama.

The Dialogues, however, are not conversations of ordinary length, but set discourses, in which each speaker casts his thoughts and feelings into the form of gnomic or lyric poetry: gnomic, when he dwells on his views of human life and society, his generalisations regarding conduct and character; and lyric, when he gives fervent utterance to personal emotions and aspirations. The poet, as a literary genius, is helped rather than hindered by the medium which he chooses for the expression of his ideas. He has mastered the technique of the Hebrew rhythmical distich, which in his hands usually, some think invariably, has a second added to it in order to form a tetrastich or quatrain. No other book of scripture is marked by a power so sustained, an art so elaborate and finished. Whether the poem is metrical as well as rhythmical is still a vexed question. Many lines are of approximately the same length; but Bickell's attempt to reduce the whole to metrical form does too great violence to the text, and has not won any great measure of acceptance.

[1] A. B. Bruce, *The Moral Order of the World*, 222.

The Prologue and Epilogue.

There are not a few indications that the Prologue and Epilogue, which are in prose, were not written by the author of the Dialogues; and it has been very plausibly suggested that they originally formed the beginning and end of a People's Book of Job, the central part of which has been lost. This Folk-tale (if its existence may be assumed) freely uses the divine name Jahweh, which is habitually avoided in the Dialogues. In the Prologue the Satan is the instigator of Job's trials and the agent of his sufferings, but in the Dialogues the discussion of the moral government of the world proceeds without a single reference to Satanic agency. In the Prologue, Job bears his afflictions with exemplary patience, and in the Epilogue receives the acknowledgment that he has spoken rightly of God (42^7); whereas in the Dialogues, by his own confession, he does not always speak aright ($40^{4.5}$), and in the end he has to repudiate his unwise and impatient words (42^6). According to the Epilogue, Jahweh is so angry with Job's friends, that but for Job's intercession He would inflict on them a condign punishment for their folly, *i.e.* impiety (42^8); whereas in the Dialogues, while they are the representatives of an effete theology, they are pious men, who never tire of commending that same wisdom and patient submission which win for the Job of the Prologue and Epilogue the divine praise and reward. It is probable that in the central (lost) portion of the People's Book the friends gave Job 'foolish,' impious advice, similar to what he received from his distracted wife, while he himself maintained all through the same wise and humble demeanour as is attributed to him in the Prologue. And while the People's Book evidently adhered to the old doctrine of rewards and punishments, regarding the misfortune of the righteous as merely a temporary exception to the universal rule, the writer of the Dialogues definitely abandons the dogma of the prosperity of the righteous and the adversity of the wicked. One more indication of a difference of date and authorship is the fact that in the Prologue and Epilogue sacrifices are treated as an essential part of religion, whereas they are never mentioned in the Dialogues. Since the writer of the People's Book betrays no knowledge of the

Deuteronomic law regarding a central sanctuary and a single legitimate priesthood (1^5 42^8); since he regards the Sabeans and the Chaldeans as no more than marauding Bedouins, whereas in course of time the former became travelling merchantmen (3^8) and the latter a great conquering nation; and since he can still conjoin the religion of Israel and that of Edom without any sense of incongruity,—it seems probable that the prose story of Job was written and published before the days of Josiah.[1]

The Speeches of Elihu (chs. 32–37).

There are many evidences that Elihu did not appear in the original poem. In the Prologue the *dramatis personae* are enumerated and described, but Elihu is not named; and in the Epilogue, where judgment is pronounced upon the speeches of Job and his friends, he is ignored. After he has finished his last speech (37^{24}), Jahweh utters words which imply that not Elihu but Job has just ceased speaking. Artistically and structurally the drama suffers from the interpolation of Elihu's discourses. In literary and poetical power they are inferior to the rest of the poem. Though not without individual passages of considerable beauty, they are as a whole prolix, rambling, laboured, and involved. In diction they are more largely coloured by Aramaic words and idioms than the other parts of the drama.

These speeches have, however, unquestionable doctrinal value, and a fresh interest is awakened in them when Elihu is regarded as the spokesman of a new age, the exponent of revised and amended views on the enigma of suffering. The solution which he offers is not found in any part of the original poem. While the idea of innocent suffering is as inconceivable to him as to Job's friends, he is disposed to regard any dark visitation of providence, not as a punishment of the wicked, or a mysterious ordeal to be undergone by erring servants of God, but as a discipline intended for the purifying and ennobling of

[1] There is not a little, however, to be said for the view of Cheyne, that the writers of the People's Book and of Is 53 may have been contemporaries and friends. See his *Jewish Rel. Life after the Exile*, 162 ff. A similar opinion is held by Cornill and Karl Kautzsch.

character. He teaches, as none of the three friends do, that God chastises not in anger but in love; and, while the friends paint in glowing colours the returning material prosperity of the sufferer who is wise enough to humble himself before a wrathful God, Elihu depicts the spiritual prosperity of the afflicted man whom bitter experience, interpreted by one of God's angel-ministers, leads to sincere repentance. There is nothing in any of the utterances of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar to compare with the second half of ch. 33. Dillon, therefore, rightly enough describes the Elihu speeches as the production of a 'second-rate writer and first-class theologian.'[1]

The speeches are further interesting as the criticism passed by a new age, perhaps a century or two nearer our own, upon the original drama. With the confidence of youth, and professedly in the power of the divine spirit, Elihu comes forward to put all the older disputants right. His anger is kindled against the three friends, whom he extinguishes in a few sentences (32^{11-16}); against Job, who drinks up scorning like water (34^{7}); and, one cannot help thinking, against the original poet, though this is not so explicitly stated. He evidently thinks that the eulogy of Job, which is pronounced by Jahweh as well as by the narrator ($1^{1.\ 8}$), is a mistake, and in his own speeches he assumes that Job is a very imperfect, and especially a very irreverent, person, who needs to be disciplined and humbled. He counts the original poet guilty of another impropriety in introducing the Almighty into his drama. To silence Job, no speech from the whirlwind is needed, nothing but the presence of a young man 'perfect in knowledge' ($33^{5f.}\ 36^{4}$), who is able to flash a divine light upon the problem which has baffled older minds. That Elihu faithfully represented the views of his age need not be doubted. There were probably many who were glad to have their convictions expressed and their objections stated by him. The original poem, we can see, was not as yet treated with any canonical reverence, but happily it was not deemed necessary to suppress more than a few of those parts to which strong exception was taken.

[1] *Sceptics of the OT*, 57.

The Disturber.

It is evident, however, that in the third cycle of speeches (chs. 21–27) a disturbing hand[1] has been at work, bringing the too audacious poem into some measure of conformity with orthodoxy, and thereby marring the beauty of the most symmetrical composition in the OT. Ch. 24 has little or nothing to do with the problem of the drama; and Merx's idea that it is a safe substitute for a speech which contained a terrible indictment of divine providence on account of the sufferings of the righteous (the necessary sequel to ch. 21 on the prosperity of the wicked), is almost certainly correct. Bildad's third speech, as it now stands, consists of only ten lines, six of which (25^{4-6}) are a mere gloss on 15^{14-16}. It is probable that the continuation of his discourse is to be found in 26^{5-14}, and that a part of Job's reply to it is contained in 26^{2-4} 27^{2-6}, the rest, standing originally after 26^{11}, being suppressed as another dangerous indictment of the government of the world. In 27^{7-23} Job is made to give expression to sentiments directly contradicting all that he has been saying, as well as conflicting with what he asserts afterwards. As Zophar speaks only twice in the third round of speeches, it is most likely that 27^{7-23} has been filched from him and put, as sound doctrine, into the mouth of Job.[2]

The writer of the descriptions of Behemoth and Leviathan (40^{15}–41^{34})—elaborate pieces which lack the lightness and grace of the vivid animal-sketches in chs. 38, 39—has made room for his work by dividing the divine speech into two parts. In the original poem 40^{14} was probably followed immediately by the whole of Job's palinode 40^{3-5} 42^{2-6}. Minor dislocations will be noted where they occur.

The Text.

'It is a feeble light which the Authorised Version sheds upon this poem,'[3] and no book of the OT owes so much as Job to the labours of the Revisers. The Massoretic text, however, which they for the most part followed, is far from being in a

[1] G. Hoffmann (p. 24) has a passage on *Der Zerstörer*, the Wrecker.

[2] This was first suggested by Kennicott.

[3] Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 106.

perfect state, having suffered from all the ordinary causes of corruption. By a study of the laws of Hebrew poetry, by a comparison of the Hebrew text with the ancient versions, and by ordinary literary tact, it is often possible to correct copyists' mistakes, to recognise perversions and interpolations, to detect lacunae and determine the tendency of expunged passages. Such German scholars as Ewald and Merx, Bickell and Duhm, Budde and Siegfried, and such English scholars as Bateson Wright and Cheyne, have done much to elucidate the text. Many fresh suggestions have been made since the Revisers completed their task (in 1885). In cases where a tetrastich takes the place of a distich, there is often a marked improvement in the sense if a line be omitted. The theory that the poem was written wholly in four-line stanzas is not improbable, though in a good many passages it is difficult to establish. The determination of the original text of the LXX, through the discovery of the Sahidic (Coptic) version, published in 1889, has increased the interest of scholars in the textual problem. It appears that the LXX had at one time 400 lines fewer that it has now; and Bickell's contention is that the shorter Greek version reflects the true Hebrew text,—a view largely favoured by Hatch,[1] but strongly opposed by Dillmann[2] and Driver.[3] It seems at least as likely that the 400 lines stood in the original Hebrew text and were for some reason arbitrarily omitted by the first Greek translators, as that they originally formed no part of the Hebrew text and were afterwards inserted in it. 'The LXX version of Job, even where there is no reason for supposing that the Hebrew MSS upon which it was based read differently from ours, is often free and paraphrastic: there are numerous passages which the translators altogether failed to understand; others they seem to have abridged or condensed; in others, again, they evidently sought to soften or modify expressions which seemed derogatory to the dignity or justice of God';[4] and the absence of many of the lines in question may be due to one or other of these causes. Every Hebrew reading and translation must still be regarded on its own merits.

[1] *Essays in Biblical Greek*, 215–45.
[2] *Sitzungsberichte der K. Akademie*, 1890, 1345–73.
[3] *Contemp. Review*, 1896, 257 ff.
[4] *Ib.* 262.

Appreciations.

Professor R. G. Moulton has expressed his belief that if a jury of persons well instructed in literature were empanelled to pronounce upon the question what is the greatest poem in the world's great literatures, a large majority would give their verdict in favour of the Book of Job. A few judgments are worth recalling. Luther thought Job 'magnificent and sublime as no other book of Scripture.' '*Seine Denkart*,' said Herder, '*ist königlich und göttlich*,' adding that it 'gives and will for ever give reviving energy to the faint, and strength to the powerless.'[1] To Bishop Lowth it appeared 'to stand single and unparalleled in the sacred volume.'[2] Heine called it 'the Song of Songs of Scepticism,'[3]—an inadequate title, unless scepticism is interpreted as doubt faced, fought, and conquered. Renan regarded it as 'the Hebrew book par excellence. . . . It is in the Book of Job that the force, the beauty, the depth of the Hebrew genius are seen at their best.'[4] Ewald admired 'the highly finished Book of Job, the most beautiful, and, at the same time, the most elevated production of the whole literature of Israel.'[5] Professor Davidson called it 'the most splendid creation of Hebrew poetry.'[6] Professor Fairbairn described it as 'the highest achievement of the Hebrew, or rather of the Semitic spirit, the ripe and fragrant fruit not so much of a man's or a people's genius as of the genius of a race.[7] 'There is nothing like it,' said Professor Bruce, 'either in the Bible or outside of it; nothing so thorough, so searching, or so bold.'[8] Professor Cornill looks on it as 'the crown of the Hebrew Wisdom-writings, and one of the most wonderful products of the human spirit, belonging to the literature of the world like Dante's *Divina Commedia* and Goethe's *Faust*, and, like both these mighty, all-embracing works, striving to explain the deepest

[1] *Vom Geist der hebräischen Poesie*, i. 143 f.

[2] *The Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, Lectures 32–34.

[3] So Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 104. Dillon, however, in his *Sceptics of the OT*, gives this as Heine's description of Ecclesiastes, which seems more likely. I have not been able to find the reference.

[4] *Hist. of the People of Israel*, iii. 65, 71.

[5] *Hist. of Israel*, iv. 278.

[6] *Encyc. Brit.*, art. 'Job.'

[7] *The City of God*, 143.

[8] *The Moral Order of the World.*

secrets of existence, to solve the ultimate mysteries of life.'[1] Dr. Dillon characterises it as 'an unrivalled masterpiece, the work of one in whom poetry was no mere special faculty cultivated apart from his other gifts, but the outcome of the harmonious wholeness of healthy human nature, in which upright living, untrammelled thought, deep mental vision, and luxuriant imagination combined to form the individual.'[2] Tennyson counted it 'the greatest poem of ancient or modern times.' 'The whole language,' said Ruskin, 'both of the Book of Job and the Sermon on the Mount, gives precisely the view of nature which is taken by the uninvestigating affection of a humble, but powerful mind. There is . . . the boldest and broadest glance at the apparent facts, and the most magnificent metaphor in expressing them.'[3] Froude regarded Job as 'a book of which it is to say little to call unequalled of its kind, and which will one day, perhaps, when it is allowed to stand on its own merits, be seen towering up alone, far above all the poetry of the world'[4] 'I call it,' said Carlyle, 'apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or noble sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble Book; all men's Book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending Problem,—man's destiny, and God's way with him here in this earth. And all in such free flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity; in its epic melody, and repose of reconcilement. . . . Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind;—so soft, and great; as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit.'[5]

[1] *Einleitung in das AT*, 229.
[2] *Sceptics of the OT*, 4.
[3] *Modern Painters*, iii. 323.
[4] *Short Studies*, i. 285.
[5] *Lectures on Heroes* (The Hero as Prophet).

THE BOOK OF JOB.

I. 1–5.

PIETY AND PROSPERITY.

1 THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was [1]Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. 2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. 3 His [2]substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the children of the east. 4 And his sons went and held a feast in the house of each one upon his day; and they sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. 5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and [3]renounced God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

[1] Heb. *Iyob.* [2] Or, *cattle* [3] Or, *blasphemed* So v.[11], ch. 2[5. 9].

No reader can fail to be impressed by the peaceful beauty of the opening verses. The Prologue of the poem is an epic torso (Introd. p. 23), which has the grand simplicity of other epics of antiquity. Imitating the picturesque style of the earliest Hebrew traditions, it sympathetically delineates the manners of a patriarchal age, in which the State has not yet come into being, and the Family presents itself on the most imposing scale. With a few graphic touches, it not only creates a whole picture of life and scheme of society, but indicates everything which the reader requires to know in order to follow the great lines on which the drama is to move. As the hero of the Saga it

introduces a man whose good fortune, according to the ethical ideas of the time, is in perfect keeping with his merits; who, being the most pious and virtuous sheikh of his age, is rewarded with a wealth like that of the patriarchs in Genesis, so that he surpasses all his neighbours in outward prosperity. His godliness is first emphasised, as in itself a most important fact, and the condition of his domestic felicity. Too wise and genial to frown upon the innocent pleasures of his family, he yet takes constant thought for their piety and blamelessness, thus doing everything that is humanly possible to avert misfortune from his house. While the monotony of pastoral life is relieved by a round of festal gatherings which unite his children in daily happy fellowship, he, as priest of the family, has his high days of religious devotion, in which he rises early to sanctify his sons and daughters, and make atonement for the sins they may have committed.

1 **the land of Uz.** Job is a non-Israelite; but his country cannot be certainly identified, for the data are conflicting, some pointing to a region in the N. or N.E. of Palestine, others to one in the S.E. (1) On the one hand, Uz is named in Gn 10^{23} as the first-born of Aram (Syria), and in Gn 22^{21} as the first-born of Nahor. The Chaldeans (Kasdim), who slew Job's servants (1^{17}), were the north-eastern people who afterwards founded the Babylonian empire. The author of the Elihu speeches, desiring to connect his interlocutor with the man of Uz, designates him as 'the Buzite, of the family of Ram.' The relation of Uz and Buz is indicated in Gn 22^{21}, while Ram may be either a contraction or a clerical error for Aram (cf. Ramites in 2 Ch 22^{5} with Aramites in 2 K 8^{28}). Josephus (*Ant.* I. vi. 4) says that 'of the four sons of Aram, Uz founded Trachonitis and Damascus.' A Christian and Moslem tradition, which cannot be traced farther back than the 4th cent. A.D., connects Job with the district of Hauran called Nukra.[1] (2) On the other hand, Uz is named as a clan of the original inhabitants of Edom, being the grandson of Seir the Horite (Gn $36^{20.\ 28}$). It is significant that the first of Job's friends is Eliphaz of Teman, who is so named after two clans of Edom, Eliphaz being the first-born of Esau, and Teman the first-born of Eliphaz (Gn $36^{4.\ 10\text{-}12}$). The second friend,

[1] Wetzstein in Delitzsch, ii. 395 ff.

Bildad, belonged to Shuah, a tribe in the south of Judah (Gn 25^{2}). According to La 4^{21}, Edom dwelt for a time in the land of Uz. The Sabeans, who raided Job's cattle, were an Arabian tribe. There was a Ram—tribe or country—in the south of Judah (1 Ch $2^{9.\ 25.\ 27}$). The LXX postscript to the Book of Job locates Uz 'on the borders of Edom and Arabia,' and confounds Job with Jobab, king of Edom (Gn 36^{33}). The fame of Edom as a land of wisdom (Ob ^{8} = Jer 49^{7}) certainly makes it a fitting scene for a drama in which sages discuss the deep problems of life. The point is of no great importance, and Hoffmann[1] suggests that the author perhaps knew no more about the position of Uz than we do. Cheyne's idea is that the story was brought by the Israelites from Hauran, and that 'the land of Uz,' originally in the N.E. of Palestine, was transferred to Edom by the poet, because of the traditional reputation of the Edomites for wisdom.[2]

whose name was Job (אִיּוֹב). In distinction from the other *dramatis personae*, he bears no patronymic; as a great traditional figure he needs none. An allusion made to him by Ezekiel ($14^{14.\ 20}$) indicates that his name was well known in the East; along with Noah and Daniel he was remembered as a typically righteous man. Various attempts have been made to explain the name etymologically,—'the returning,' 'the penitent' (Ar. *'awwāb*), or 'the attacked (by Satan),' or 'the attacker (of the ancient doctrine of retribution),'—but if it had been coined as befitting Job's character or history, some reference would probably have been made in the poem to its significance. It belonged to the saga, and the poet never gave a thought to its derivation. 'The history of Job was probably a tradition in the East; his name, like that of Priam of Greece, the symbol of fallen greatness, and his misfortunes the problem of philosophers.'[3]

that man was perfect and upright. There is an impressive accumulation of epithets to indicate that Job was a model of excellence—a blameless, whole-hearted servant of God, who failed in none of his duties to men. It is better (with the Targ., some MSS, and the parallel passages 1^{8} 2^{3}) to strike out 'and' before 'one that feared God'; there are then two pairs of

[1] *Hiob*, p. 35. [2] *Encyc. Bib.* 2469.
[3] Froude, p. 297.

conjoined terms. That Job was perfect (תָּם, cf. the NT τέλειος), is repeatedly affirmed by God and constantly maintained by himself, though it is never claimed for him that he was sinless. In the broadly human sense of the words he was *integer vitae*, and he held fast his 'integrity,' or 'perfection' (תֻּמָּה, $2^{3.9}$). His own conception of the perfect life—his moral ideal—is presented with the utmost fulness and clearness in chs. 29 and 31. It is a type of righteousness which is recognised in all times and climes. In the OT the moral life is always inseparable from the spiritual.

2, 3 **sons . . . daughters . . . substance.** No element of good fortune is wanting; the best man is the happiest, happiness being measured by the ordinary standard. Worldly prosperity proves to himself and to all his neighbours that the blessing of God rests upon his life. Such wealth as a simple society loves is given him in abundance. His children are an heritage of Jahweh (Ps 127^{3}). The proportion of his sons to his daughters —seven to three—accords with the Eastern idea of the relative value of man and woman. The inventory of his **substance** (live stock) is given in round numbers, which in pairs make up 10, 10,000, 1000. The word tr. 'sheep' (צֹאן) means small cattle—sheep and goats. The **she-asses** were valued more than the males on account of their milk, and therefore were more numerous. Though the **yoke of oxen** proves that Job was not a wandering Bedouin, but a settled Emir, yet his wealth is indicated by the size of his flocks and herds (like Abraham's, Gn 12^{16}). 'In the presence of this good man, men lived the better, trusted God the more that Job was prosperous. He seemed to be a living proof of Providence.'[1] **The greatest** means the wealthiest, and therefore most powerful and honoured (cf. Gn 26^{13}). **The children of the east** was a collective name for the Arabic and Aramaic tribes living to the N. and N.E. of Palestine.

4, 5 **held a feast.** These verses mention a detail in Job's family life which gives convincing proof of his piety, and provides a starting-point for new developments. The seven sons, grown up but apparently still unmarried, lived each in his own house, as if they were kings' sons (cf. 2 S 13^{7} $14^{30f.}$); and in this happy family there was **a feast** spread for every day of the week, each

[1] Fairbairn, 159.

son, according to order of seniority, taking his turn in inviting his brothers and sisters to his house. The wise father, though he did not join them, looked with a kindly eye upon their innocent mirth, only taking care that it should be blended with the fear of God. At the end of each cycle of feasts, apparently on the evening of the seventh day of the week, Job sent for his children **and sanctified them** (וַיְקַדְּשֵׁם), that early in the morning of the first day he might offer **a sacrifice** for each of them. The 'sanctification,' which was a preparation for the act of worship (cf. 1 S 16^5), consisted in ablutions and other rites, including a change of garments (Gn 35^1). To avoid the danger of transmitting the 'holiness' contracted at the altar, and so making common things taboo, it was the practice to keep special robes for religious occasions.[1] The atoning sacrifice which Job offers is not the technical sin-offering (אָשָׁם) of the post-exile priestly code, but the ancient burnt-offering (עֹלָה), though the LXX arbitrarily adds, 'and a calf for a sin-offering' (*καὶ μόσχον ἕνα περὶ ἁμαρτίας*). **It may be that my sons have sinned, and renounced** (marg. blasphemed) **God in their hearts.** While Job, being no hard ascetic, gives his children ample freedom, he neglects none of his duties as a father, and his piety is at once so scrupulous that it provides against the bare possibility of evil, and so inward that it recognises sins of the heart. What he fears is not open blasphemy on the part of any of his children,—a sin so heinous that it was punished in ancient Israel by stoning (1 K 21),—but irreverent thoughts in the midst of social enjoyment. The word trans. 'renounce' (better AV 'curse') properly means 'bless' (בֵּרֵךְ). The interpretation 'to bid farewell to,' and hence 'to disown' or 'renounce' (Dav., Dill.) is scarcely admissible, for a stronger meaning is required in 1^{11} $2^{5.\ 9}$ (as well as in 2 K $21^{10.\ 13}$). The word is a euphemism —'a blessing overdone and so really a curse, as in vulgar English as well as in the Shemitic cognates' (*Oxf. Heb. Lex.*). Duhm finds in this term an evidence that the Prologue was not from the hand which wrote the Dialogues, for the writer of ch. 3 would not have stumbled at the actual word 'curse' (קִלֵּל) any more than Isaiah did (8^{21}); while he would scarcely

[1] Cf. W. R. Smith, *Rel. Sem.*[2] 451.

have regarded a sacrifice as either necessary or effective for a thoughtless word, of which *his* Job confesses himself often guilty (cf. 6[26]).

I. 6–12.

THE FIRST COUNCIL IN HEAVEN.

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and [1]Satan came also among them. 7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. 8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job? [2]for there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil. 9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? 10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his [3]substance is increased in the land. 11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will renounce thee to thy face. 12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy [4]power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

[1] That is, *the Adversary*. [2] Or, *that* [3] Or, *cattle* [4] Heb. *hand*.

Beautiful as is the idyllic opening scene on earth, the Prologue in Heaven is still more admirable. The daring of the conceptions is matched by their supreme dignity. It was doubtless a question often keenly debated by the Hebrew sages, whether human virtue was a reality or a pretence, and the writer, drawing a veil, discloses a heavenly council-chamber, in which the same question is eagerly discussed at a meeting of the sons of the Elohim. Job's piety becomes the subject of laudation on the part of Jahweh, and therefore of detraction on that of the Satan. This minister of state, whose function is to try the sincerity of men's professions, does not deny Job's devoutness, but throws suspicion upon its motive, and insinuates a doubt whether he would cultivate goodness if it were dissociated from the prosperity which has hitherto accompanied it. No doubt the saint serves God well,—but is it any wonder, seeing that he is so richly rewarded?

What is his piety but a refined selfishness? Let him be deprived of all that makes up his enviable good fortune—flocks and herds, servants and children—and his religion will be proved to be hollow,—he will curse God to His face. While the Satan is a sceptic—*der Geist der stets verneint*—'God, who is Job's Maker, is, on the other hand, a believer. He stands by Job, puts a stake on him, and authorises Satan to try him.'[1] It is obvious that the question of Job's disinterestedness, once raised, can be settled only by the way of experiment, and Jahweh, listening to His subordinate's objection, is obliged, against His inclination, to consent to the trial. It is arbitrary to assume that there is any thought of deepening Job's piety or purifying his character by suffering. This is to confuse the issue.[2] The experiment takes place, not for the sufferer's moral good, but in order to silence doubt as to the sincerity of his goodness.

6 **Now there was a day.** There were audience days in heaven, on which the sons of the Elohim came to present their reports and receive fresh commissions. Each of them had a province, or sphere of influence, for whose good order he was responsible. God judged among the Elohim (Ps 82^1). He traced the evils of earth to the misrule of the tutelary Elohim who presided over the affairs of the different peoples (Dn $10^{13.\ 20.\ 21}$); for earthly misgovernment He punished 'the host of the high ones on high' (Is 24^{21}). **The sons of God** are such, not in the physical sense 'begotten of God,' nor even in the moral sense 'akin to God,' but as beings who belong to the family or class of **the Elohim**, just as members of the human race are called either 'men' or 'sons of men,' and members of the prophetic order either 'prophets' or 'sons of the prophets.' These celestial beings, subordinate to God, are first mentioned in mythology (Gn 6^1), and they were originally perhaps Titanic beings who disputed the sovereignty of Jahweh (if we may illustrate by 21^{22} 25^2); but they are now His ministers and messengers, who assemble at stated times to do Him obeisance and render an account of their stewardship. As dedicated to His service, they are His 'holy ones' (5^1), but they are not thought of as morally perfect; rather they are morally

[1] *Mark Rutherford*, p. 275.

[2] A mistake of many exegetes, shared by Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, iii. 54.

neutral, and in comparison with God they are impure and unwise (15^{15}, cf. 4^{18}). **and Satan came also among them:** rather, 'the Satan' (הַשָּׂטָן) the accuser, the opposer. The word is not yet a proper name, but the official title of one of the sons of the Elohim. It is his function to oppose men in their claims to righteousness before God. He is not a fallen or evil angel, but one of God's agents, who comes with the others to report his service. But while he appears 'among them,' he is in a certain sense distinct from them. During his tours of inspection in the world he has seen so much hypocrisy, that he has ceased to believe in human virtue, and is ever ready to suggest base motives, convinced that every man is venal. His theory is that religion is but disguised egoism—so much work for so much wages—the most humble because the most profitable of services. It pleases him to be not only the moral and religious censor of mankind, but the agent of God's darker providences; and, as he would be glad to have his theory of universal selfishness proved, he 'instigates' God to injure Job (2^{3}). He lies in wait for the tripping and falling of the righteous. Not that he is the secret foe of Jahweh Himself, whose honour he is bound to uphold, but he hugs his cynicism, and is ready to wager that he is right in his low view as to the mainspring of human conduct, while God, who believes in the saints and is proud of them, is deluded in His flattering judgments. 'The Satan is distinguishable from his counterpart in Zechariah (3^{1}), at most by this, that while not yet the calumniator of the pious man, he still excites suspicion against him.'[1] It is not difficult to explain the later development in which the Satan becomes the sneering enemy of God, the evil genius who seduces men to their ruin. While Marti suggests that he is the personification of the self-accusing conscience of Israel,[2] Duhm (p. 7) thinks that he is rather the personification of the malice of fate.

8 **a perfect and an upright man.** The author's tribute to Job (1^{1}) is now endorsed by Jahweh Himself, who strengthens it with the judgment that there is **none like him** in the earth. As the cynic of the heavenly court requires to explain this

[1] Kautzsch in Hastings' *DB*, Extra Vol. p. 730a.
[2] *Theol. St. Kr.*, 1892, pp. 208–245.

phenomenal virtue, it is brought under his notice. Has he considered Job? The consideration may serve to modify, if not to cure, his scepticism.

9 The Satan has his retort ready, answering one question with another. Job's piety has neither escaped his watchful eye nor deluded his analytic mind. He is in the habit of looking into the causes of things, and is convinced that the ruling spirit of the world is selfishness. Of course, Job fears God; but does he do it **for nought**? Hedged from all evil and blessed with all good, who would not be devout? It is a case of sycophancy.

> 'Saint though he be,
> From shrewd good sense,
> He'll slave for hire . . .
> And not from love.'[1]

There is no such thing as pure human goodness. Let the favourite be degraded, and denuded of all his possessions, and he will **curse** (lit. bless) **God to his face.** The word meaning 'for nought' (חִנָּם, equivalent to Lat. *gratis*) 'indicates that the readers of the old Folktale by no means accepted the ordinary eudaemonism. To be pious without regard to advantages, from an inner motive, because one cannot be otherwise, is an idea inconceivable to the Satan, but not to the ancient people.'[2]

11 Read, **he will curse thee.** Lit. 'if he will not curse thee,' the conclusion, 'may so and so happen to me,' being idiomatically left unexpressed. The Satan is ready to swear: 'My oath on it, his religion will turn out to be a sham.'

12 Jahweh accepts the Satan's challenge with reluctance, not because He fears the result of the trial, but because He is unwilling to seem angry with one whom He loves. The accuser is logically justified in suggesting that, as there has not yet been any proof of Job's integrity, he must remain a sceptic till he sees reason to alter his mind. He has therefore to be satisfied; and if, on the one hand, God dooms Job to suffer, on the other He honours him by staking His faith in humanity on his steadfastness. This 'is no story of a single thing which happened once, but belongs to humanity itself, and is the drama of the trial of man, with almighty God and the angels as the spectators of it.'[3]

[1] *The Dream of Gerontius.* [2] Duhm, p. 8. [3] Froude, p. 297.

all that he hath is in thy power. The Satan is permitted to subject Job's piety to the severest possible test, without touching his person. In dealing strokes of misfortune, Jahweh acts not directly but through His agent; cf. 'the destroyers' (angels of death) in 33^{22}, and the angel of the pestilence in 2 S $24^{16.17}$, 2 K 19^{35}, Ezk 9^{4-6}. This delegation of power (which Philo called κολαστικὴ δύναμις) does not shift His responsibility for the calamities which afflict mankind (2^3). The Satan's haste to be gone from the presence of Jahweh on such an errand seems indecent, though perhaps personal feeling is scarcely to be ascribed to one who merely represents and executes the trying, sifting providence of God. 'Just as a king must sometimes, with a bleeding heart, sacrifice his favourite to the judgment of public opinion, that he may not be considered a blind partisan, so must Jahweh give up Job, since Job has not thus far been able to give every manner of proof of his faithfulness, especially those proofs which the displeasure of the Lord imposes upon the firm and unselfish character.'[1]

I. 13–22.

THE FIRST TRIAL.

13 And it fell on a day when his sons and his daughters were
eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, 14
that there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were
plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: 15 and [1] the
Sabeans fell *upon them*, and took them away; yea, they have
slain the [2] servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am
escaped alone to tell thee. 16 While he was yet speaking,
there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from
heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the [2] servants, and
consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.
17 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and
said, The Chaldeans made three bands, and [3] fell upon the
camels, and have taken them away, yea, and slain the [2] servants
with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell
thee. 18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another,
and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking
wine in their eldest brother's house: 19 and, behold, there

[1] Duhm, *The New World*, 1894, p. 334.

came a great wind [4]from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped; 21 and he said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. 22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God with foolishness.

[1] Heb. *Sheba.* [2] Heb. *young men.* [3] Or, *made a raid* [4] Or, *over*

The scene changes again from heaven to earth. The Satan's plots have ripened, and on a day when Job's children are feasting in the eldest son's house, four successive messengers, sole survivors of disaster, rush breathless and amazed into the father's presence, and announce a series of calamities, each exceeding the last in magnitude. Man and nature, earth and heaven—the Sabeans, the lightning, the Chaldeans, the whirlwind—seem to conspire in a deadly work which, almost in the twinkling of an eye, leaves Job bereft of substance, of servants, and of ten children. He is overwhelmed with grief; yet, with almost incredible patience, he blesses Jahweh who has given and who has taken away; thus triumphantly standing the first test of his fidelity, displaying that spirit of endurance (ὑπομονή) which all ages have regarded as exemplary (Ja 5^{11}).

13 **his sons and his daughters.** The subject of the previous sentence is the Satan, but the reference is now to Job, whose name the LXX inserts. **were eating . . . in their eldest brother's house.** This touch is added for the purpose of indicating that the whole series of disasters fell upon Job's household immediately after an act of family worship. On the morning of the day, he had called all his sons and daughters together, and offered an atoning sacrifice for each of them (1^5). It is thus made perfectly clear at the outset that the mysterious blows of misfortune are not to be regarded as judgments upon the father or his children for their sin.

14 **The oxen were plowing.** The time of the year was therefore winter. **the Sabeans:** lit. 'Sheba,' the land being named for the people, as in Is 7^2 'Syria is confederate with Ephraim.' The Sabeans were a branch of the Cushites, or

Ethiopians (10[7]), settled on the Red Sea or Arabian Gulf. In 6[19] they are traders going in caravans, but here they appear as a tribe of Bedouin robbers hovering on the northern border of Arabia.

16 **The fire of God** is the lightning (1 K 18[38], 2 K 1[12], Ps 78[48]), rather than rain of fire and brimstone (Delitzsch). In a storm of phenomenal violence 7000 sheep and their shepherds are all struck and killed. The four disasters come alternately from the cruelty of man and the pitilessness of nature.

17 **The Chaldeans.** This people, the founders of one of the ancient Eastern empires, originally dwelt by the Persian Gulf, and here they are regarded as Bedouins. Cheyne[1] thinks that the description of them as *robbers* 'is most easily explained by supposing a covert allusion to the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar,' but see Introd. p. 24. **made three bands**: a common ancient strategem; compare that of Abraham (Gn 14[15]), Gideon (Jg 7[16]), Abimelech (Jg 9[43]), Saul (1 S 11[11]).

19 **a great wind.** A wind which struck the four corners of the house was a tornado. 'Whirlwinds from the South sweeping along' (Is 21[1]) are familiar phenomena in Syria; they would easily throw down lightly built houses on the border of the desert. **the young men** (נְעָרִים). The three daughters were also buried in the ruins, but they are apparently forgotten, or else 'the masc. as *prior gender* includes the fem.' (Gesenius-Kautzsch, 122 *g*).

20 When Job has heard the whole tale of disaster, culminating in the death of his children, he gives expression to his passionate grief by rending his mantle—the outer garment (מְעִיל) worn by men of rank over the tunic (כְּתֹנֶת)—and cutting off his hair, thus making himself like a beggar or a slave—a common way of symbolising profound grief. Then he **fell down upon the ground**, not in unconsciousness or despair, but in devotion, prostrating himself till his face touched the earth.

21 **and he said, Naked came I.** This is not to be joined to 'worshipped,' as if Job uttered the words while he was still prostrate on the ground. Before God he was dumb, motionless, amazed, and it is to men that he speaks these words of pious resignation, pathetically recognising that he is now as poor as

[1] *Job and Solomon*, p. 73.

he was at his birth (cf. Ec 5^{15}, 1 Ti 4^{7}). As he came at the beginning from his mother's womb, so at the end he must **return thither**, a singular expression, meaning either the womb of mother earth,[1] or Sheol,[2] or, vaguely, the state of non-existence.[3] **the LORD . . . the LORD.** The Prologue, unlike the Dialogues, naïvely puts the divine name Jahweh (יהוה) into the mouth of an Edomite. The reiteration of the divine name is a characteristic note of Oriental piety. Jahweh's right to take away what Jahweh has given is devoutly acknowledged. **blessed be the name.** The word which the Satan used, ironically or euphemistically, in the sense of 'curse' (1^{11}), has now its proper meaning.

22 **nor charged God with foolishness.** This is better than 'foolishly,' for it is not the author's opinion of Job's language, but Job's thought of God's providence, which is the point in question. The word for folly (תִּפְלָה) is an unusual one, meaning tastelessness, insipidity, and so want of moral discernment. The *Oxf. Heb. Lex.* renders 'He did not ascribe unseemliness to God,'—the opposite of giving glory to God (Ps 29^{1}). Cheyne[4] would read 'nor spake unadvisedly with his lips against God' (וְלֹא בִטֵּא בִּשְׂפָתָיו, cf. Ps 106^{33}).

II. 1–13.

THE SECOND HEAVENLY COUNCIL, AND THE SECOND TRIAL.

1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. 3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job? [1]for there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil: and he still holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, [2]to destroy

[1] Ewald. [2] Budde.
[3] Davidson. [4] *Encyc. Bib.* 2467 n.

him without cause. 4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. 5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce thee to thy face. 6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; only spare his life. 7 So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. 8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat among the ashes. 9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? renounce God, and die. 10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the [3]foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: and they made an appointment together to come to bemoan him and to comfort him. 12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven. 13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his [4]grief was very great.

[1] Or, *that* [2] Heb. *to swallow him up.* [3] Or, *impious* [4] Or, *pain*

In a second meeting of the sons of the Elohim, Jahweh recurs to the case of Job, who has splendidly vindicated the confidence reposed in him, maintaining his integrity in the midst of unparalleled calamities. Jahweh therefore justly claims the victory, and makes His servant the subject of a new eulogy. The Satan, however, unabashed, repeats his old question, 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' and now insinuates that Jahweh's servant is no less inhuman than irreligious, his steadfastness being due to a callousness which cares little for friend or child so long as a man's own skin is safe. The trial, he argues, has missed the mark, since it has left the chief person untouched. Let Job be smitten in his own body, and he will curse God to His face. The Satan is therefore permitted to proceed with the trial, being only enjoined to spare Job's life; but he is again defeated. Smitten with a loathsome disease, and tempted even

by his own wife to curse God, Job reveals in his deeper affliction a deeper piety.

3 **thou movedst me against him.** The verb (הֵסִית) is used chiefly in a bad sense, to entice, to seduce (cf. 1 Ch 21^1, 1 K 21^{15}); but here more generally, to incite, to instigate. The impulse to prove Job in so hurtful a manner came from the Satan. 'Jahweh's language is touchingly compassionate, as if already it almost repented Him thus to have destroyed the hero without any fault of his' (Ewald). To us it cannot but seem strange that no pitiful reference is made to the ten innocent children who have been removed like mere pawns in a game. But in this drama of the soul there is an artistic economy which wastes no words upon side-issues.

4 **Skin for skin.** The Satan speaks with the coolness of a chartered libertine. The proverb which he quotes with such aptness and insolence in heaven was redolent of earth and its usages. It probably arose among tribes for whom skins were an important article of barter and exchange, and meant, 'You give (or get) a skin for a skin's worth.' When a shepherd or herdsman was threatened by the Bedouins, he counted himself lucky if he saved his own skin by paying (the skin of) a sheep or ox; and the proverb admitted of many applications in ordinary life. The Satan, who regards every man as mercenary, and egoism as the sole motive of action, suggests that Job, congratulating himself on his own safety when all his possessions are gone, has no real cause as yet to apostatise from God. But sickness is the most searching of all tests, especially if it is incurable. That still remains to be tried.

6 **only spare his life.** The Satan is, in the abstract, right in saying that all hope of further happiness must be taken away, before it can be shown whether Job's prosperity is not the real motive of his godliness. Having seen through the righteousness of the bulk of mankind, and being sure that it is rooted in mere selfishness, the Accuser remains quite unconvinced that Job's piety is any exception to the general rule. This time, therefore, there must be no room for doubt, and by God's own decree the experiment is made crucial.

7 **sore boils** (שְׁחִין רָע). The language is general and probably euphemistic. It has been assumed from the earliest times that

the disease was a loathsome and dangerous form of leprosy, called elephantiasis, the symptoms of which correspond with the numerous indications scattered through the book. 'Itching (2^{8}), sores breaking and hardening again (7^{5}), the blackening and eating away of the skin and the members (30^{30} 18^{30}), shocking change of appearance (2^{12}), violent pains (2^{13} 16^{6}), gnawing in the limbs (30^{17}), the utmost emaciation (19^{20}), fever ($30^{27.\ 30}$), sleeplessness and terrifying dreams ($7^{4.\ 14}$), weeping eyes and dim sight (16^{16}), bad breath (19^{17})—these are all symptoms of that fell disease' (Budde). And these are the instruments of torture with which the Satan seeks to wring curses from the lips of Heaven's favourite. Leprosy was in a special sense the 'stroke' or 'plague' (Lv $13^{45.\ 46}$). In Is 53^{4} the Vulgate reads, 'et nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum,' where our version has 'stricken.'

8 **among the ashes.** The contrasts of scene and colour are startling. He who in his halcyon days was the happiest man on earth becomes during his probation the most wretched of mortals. The LXX adds 'outside the city' (ἔξω τῆς πόλεως). The dust-heap, or mound formed by the agelong accumulation of rubbish (in Arabic *mazbalah*), lies beyond the walls of an Eastern town, sometimes reaching such a height that it is used as a watch-tower.

9 Read, **Then said his wife . . . curse God, and die.** The Adversary has spared Job's wife, 'lest misery should harbour any possibilities unrealised.'[1] The distracted woman, seeing her husband suffer so terribly and so hopelessly, suggests that an instantaneous death, such as might follow blasphemy, would be better than a lingering, painful, loathsome end. Some readers hold that Job 'thinks of suicide, suggested to him by his wife';[2] but, while that way of deliverance would have seemed natural to a Roman, there is no evidence that it ever presented itself to Job, who recognised that God alone had the power and right of life and death.

10 **Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.** The Hebrew 'fool' (נָבָל, fem. found only here) is the man or woman who, having no perception of religious and moral

[1] Dillon, 73. [2] *Mark Rutherford*, 279.

relations, repudiates in practice the claims which these impose. As very hard things have sometimes been said of Job's wife, it is to be noted, first, that he does not call her one of the foolish women, though he says that she speaks (for once) like one of them; and, second, that instead of asking, 'Shall I receive,' he gently urges, 'Shall we . . . shall we,' indicating that she is, as she always has been, inseparable from him in spirit.[1] The momentary frenzy of a mother, who bore the loss of her ten children without impiety, and only forgot herself in an agony of sympathy with her stricken husband, is not unpardonable. Her fevered utterance is to be explained pathologically rather than morally or theologically. The miracle was that she kept her reason.

the hand of God. Stunned, bewildered, prostrated as he is by the sudden, repeated, and aggravated blows of adversity, Job does not let one word of repining escape his lips. He cannot doubt that evil as well as good comes from the hand of God, and as yet he has not begun to be haunted by the maddening thought that the heart of the Eternal is alienated from him and has planned all these appalling visitations in anger. Faith in God's goodness is the rooted habit of his soul, and the storms of calamity are powerless to shake it. Happy the man who, when the shipwreck of his hopes has 'stunned him from his power to think and all his knowledge of himself,'[2] yet remains 'very sure of God,'[3] and does not **sin with his lips.** A fine Roman parallel will be found in Plutarch's *Life of Paulus Aemilius*, who accepted with equal patience the greatest sorrow that could befall a man, the loss of both his sons at the time when life was sweetest and grief felt most keenly—the hour of his triumph.[4]

11 **Job's three friends,** who came by agreement to condole with him, were rich and eminent men like himself, drawn to him in the past by equal social standing and common religious faith. The LXX calls them kings, and we may at least think of them as emirs—independent chiefs. As they lived at some

[1] In all Blake's wonderful Illustrations they appear together.
[2] Tennyson, *In Mem.* xvi.; pronouns changed.
[3] Browning, *La Saisiaz.*
[4] Stewart and Long's Translation, i. 456 ff.

distance from each other as well as from their friend, and travelling was slow in those days, some considerable time elapsed before they could arrive. Eliphaz has an Edomite name (Gn 36^{4}), and Teman is frequently mentioned as an important city of Edom (Am 1^{12}, Ob ^{3}, Jer 49^{7}, Ezk 25^{13}). Bildad may mean 'Bel has loved.' Zophar probably gets his name from Zepho (Gn 36^{11}), which the LXX writes Σωφάρ. His home, Naamah, can scarcely be the town of that name in the Shephēlah (Jos 15^{41}), but is rather to be located in the east of Jordan. The name (which Reuss interprets as *Beauséjour*) was common in later times.

12 **and knew him not.** Their friend was so changed by the ravages of disease that they did not recognise him. Amazed and horrified at the sight of his deformed and loathsome figure, they wept, rent their garments, and sprinkled dust upon their heads. 'As showers of dust lay waste a fruitful land, so is Job's prosperity laid waste, and they, his friends, are stricken with him' (Duhm).

13 **seven days and seven nights.** This was the time customarily spent in mourning for the dead (Gn 50^{10}, 1 S 31^{13}).

and none spake a word. 'They do honour by profound silence to his vast grief' (Ewald). 'They do not inflict on him meaningless commonplaces. . . . Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, sitting in the dust with Job, not daring to intrude upon him, are for ever an example of what man once was and ought to be to man.'[1]

III. 1–26.

LIFE CURSED AND DEATH DESIRED.

1 After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.
2 And Job answered and said:
3 Let the day perish wherein I was born,
And the night which said, There is a man child conceived.
4 Let that day be darkness;
Let not God [1]regard it from above,
Neither let the light shine upon it.

[1] *Mark Rutherford*, 277.

5 Let darkness and [2]the shadow of death claim it for their own;
Let a cloud dwell upon it;
Let all that maketh black the day terrify it.
6 As for that night, let thick darkness seize upon it:
Let it not [3]rejoice among the days of the year;
Let it not come into the number of the months.
7 Lo, let that night be [4]barren;
Let no joyful voice come therein.
8 Let them curse it that curse the day,
Who are [5]ready to rouse up leviathan.
9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark:
Let it look for light, but have none;
Neither let it behold the eyelids of the morning:
10 Because it shut not up the doors of my *mother's* womb,
Nor hid trouble from mine eyes.
11 Why died I not from the womb?
Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?
12 Why did the knees receive me?
Or why the breasts, that I should suck?
13 For now should I have lien down and been quiet;
I should have slept; then had I been at rest:
14 With kings and counsellors of the earth,
Which [6]built up waste places for themselves;
15 Or with princes that had gold,
Who filled their houses with silver:
16 Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been;
As infants which never saw light.
17 There the wicked cease from [7]troubling;
And there the weary be at rest.
18 There the prisoners are at ease together;
They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.
19 The small and great are there;
And the servant is free from his master.
20 Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,
And life unto the bitter in soul;
21 Which [8]long for death, but it cometh not;
And dig for it more than for hid treasures;
22 Which rejoice [9]exceedingly,
And are glad, when they can find the grave?
23 *Why is light given* to a man whose way is hid,
And whom God hath hedged in?
24 For my sighing cometh [10]before I eat,
And my roarings are poured out like water.

25 For [11]the thing which I fear cometh upon me,
And that which I am afraid of cometh unto me.
26 [12]I am not at ease, neither am I quiet, neither have I rest;
But trouble cometh.

[1] Or, *inquire after* [2] Or, *deep darkness* (and so elsewhere)
[3] Some ancient versions read, *be joined unto.* [4] Or, *solitary*
[5] Or, *skilful* [6] Or, *built solitary piles* [7] Or, *raging*
[8] Heb. *wait.* [9] Or, *unto exultation* [10] Or, *like my meat*
[11] Or, *the thing which I feared is come &c.*
[12] Or, *I was not at ease . . . yet trouble came*

The transition from the almost preternaturally patient, uncomplaining Job of the Prologue to the despairing Job of the opening Dialogue is mediated with fine psychological insight. The faith which meets the first shock of disaster with noble fortitude may be unequal to the perpetual strain of the monotonous aftertime. Sometimes the imagination does its work slowly, and the mourner takes long to realise the full extent of his misery. But grief must sooner or later seek expression, for if the overcharged heart did not find relief it would break. The presence of old friends, and their deep unspoken sympathy, break down Job's composure.[1] No longer attempting to control himself, he pours out a torrent of bitter lamentations. His true friends will surely not blame his wild words of despair, but sympathise with his pitiful cry for light and for comfort. It is noticeable that in this first outburst Job sensitively shrinks from making any complaint of injustice. It is as yet things impersonal, such as the day of his birth and the night of his conception, that stir his feeling and bear the brunt of his maledictions. He gives expression to a boundless weariness and sick longing for death. Only towards the end of his monologue does he vaguely hint that God Himself is the cause of his affliction, and not till his friends have begun to ply him with their theodicies does he leap to the desperate conclusion that he is forgotten, forsaken, rejected of God.

1 **Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day.** 'The accumulated burden of his despair, which can hardly explain its own cause, rushes forth in the mad execration of the day of his birth.'[2] The fantastic imprecations which relieve his unquiet heart and brain are not to be judged too severely, and the

[1] Cf. Wicksteed, *Blake's Vision*, 76 f. [2] Ewald.

sufferer himself, moved by instincts of reverence, is soon heard admitting that 'the speeches of one that is desperate are as wind' (6^{26}). He utters the ancient cry of the sufferer, 'Oh that I had never been born'; cf. Ec $4^{2.3}$, and Sophocles (*Oed. Col.* 1225), τὸ μὴ φῦναι τὸν ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον, 'Never to be at all excels all fame.' There is, of course, a wide difference between the natural cry of despair and a baneful, blighting, settled pessimism.

3 **Let the day perish . . . And the night.** The day of his birth and the night of his conception are first named together; then the day receives a detailed imprecation of two verses ($^{4.5}$), and the night, as doubly guilty, of four ($^{6-9}$). According to primitive ideas, a curse not only gave expression to the speaker's hatred and wrath, but had a certain occult power to get itself realised. Job is not to be regarded as personifying the day; his attitude towards it is more naïve and less rhetorical. He thinks of it not as a neutral period of twenty-four hours, but as a living thing which brings men good or ill fortune, and which at its annual return is always the same. Hence Job, like Jeremiah (20^{14-18}), in the violence of his passion could wish to revenge himself on the cause of his misery 'by cursing his day.' Compare Constance's words (*King John*, III. 1):

> 'A wicked day and not a holy day!
> What hath this day deserv'd? what hath it done,
> That it in golden letters should be set
> Among the high tides in the calendar?
> Nay, rather turn this day out of the week,
> This day of shame, oppression, perjury:
> Or, if it must stand still, let wives with child
> Pray that their burdens may not fall this day,
> Lest that their hopes prodigiously be cross'd.'

the night which said, There is a man child conceived. The voice is that of the Night busy with her spells. The LXX makes her say, 'Behold a boy!' (הִנֵּה instead of הָרָה). If this reading, which is adopted by Duhm and Budde, is correct, Job does not think of his conception at all, but first (vv.$^{4.5}$) curses the day of his birth, and then, more precisely (vv.$^{6-9}$), the night of it.

4 As there are three lines in this verse, Bickell and Cheyne

strike out[t a]. Duhn thinks that the second line of the couplet was accidentally omitted, then placed in the margin, and brought back into the text at the wrong place as the second line of v.[9], 'Let it look for light, but have none.' **Let not God regard it from above.** The successive days return when God summons them, just as the stars reappear when He calls them all by name (Is 40[26]). Job's desire is that the day of his birth, as a *dies ater*, may never again be called from its place of abode, so that its power to do mischief may be at an end. **from above:** all the speakers in the poem regarding heaven as God's dwelling-place. **Neither let the light shine upon it.** The noun (נְהָרָה) is found only here, but it is almost the same as the ordinary Arabic word for 'day,' and the verb (הוֹפִיעַ) occurs frequently in the poem.

5 According to mythology, the whole world belonged to **darkness and the shadow of death** until it was seized from them by the powers of light, and Job's wish is that the old masters may at least **reclaim** (גָּאַל, redeem) the fateful day on which he was born. The trans. **shadow of death** (LXX σκιὰ θανάτου) used to be regarded by many scholars as based on a mistaken etymology, and they read 'deep shadow' instead; but the traditional explanation has recently been defended by Nöldeke, Schwally, Marti, and others.

5[c] 6[a] These lines form a distich. **all that maketh black the day:** or 'the obscurations (כְּמְרִירֵי) of the day,' *i.e.* eclipses, regarded as supernatural. The noun is found only here, and is probably connected with a Syriac word for 'to be black.'

6[b. c] **Let it not be joined** (marg.). This is in accordance with the LXX, but another Heb. punctuation gives the more poetic rendering, 'Let it not **rejoice** among the days of the year.' From that happy band Job would have his birthday banished. Most days rejoice, life being essentially good, otherwise he would not indignantly curse it for being to him so evil. The Buddhist, to whom life itself is evil, never curses it, but apathetically accepts it. There can be real pessimism only where there has been optimism.

7 **Barren** is better than 'solitary' (cf. Is 49[21]). Job wishes that the unlucky night on which he came into the world may

never again hear the **joyful voice** which welcomes the coming of a man-child.

8 Those who **curse the day** are the sorcerers,—such as abounded in the East, especially in Babylonia,—whose spells can, according to popular belief, make the day unlucky. This is explained by the next line, **Who are ready to rouse up leviathan.** The day becomes unlucky when the incantations of the professional cursers have raised the dragon which coils itself round the sun and produces a horror of darkness. The idea was very wide-spread in antiquity that eclipses were caused by a monstrous serpent, whom the Hebrews called Rahab or Leviathan, and the Babylonians Tiâmat. Subdued by the God of light at the time of the creation, he yet every now and again—in eclipses and storms—seeks to recover his ancient dominion.[1]

9 **The stars of twilight** are Venus and Mercury. Let these heralds of the morn be darkened, that they may never again announce the coming of that unhappy day. Let it not see **the eyelids of the morning.** As in Aryan mythology, the Dawn is conceived as a lovely maiden whose eyelids are the light-beams that stream from the opening clouds. Cf. Sophocles, *Antig.* 103, *χρυσέας ἀμέρας βλέφαρον*, and Milton, *Lycidas*, 26, 'the opening eyelids of the morn.'

10 The crime for which the night deserves this malediction is that it did not prevent Job's birth by shutting up **the doors of his** *mother's* **womb**, either till a more auspicious day, or else for ever; in which latter case, as in Jer 20^{17}, his mother would have been his grave.

11, 12 **Why died I not from the womb?** The sufferer's mind dwells on other ways in which he might have escaped his misery. If he was fated to be born, why could he not have died at once, instead of being welcomed by a father and nourished at the breasts of a mother? Why did the knees receive him?—the custom being for the father (Gn 30^{3}), or some other person who made himself responsible for the upbringing of the child (in Gn 50^{23} a grandfather), to take it on his knees at birth.

13 Instead of living to be racked with pain, he might have **lain down** and **slept** in Sheol. Like all the ancient Hebrews, Job believes in an abode of the dead, deep as heaven is high

[1] See Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 41–69.

(11^{8}), beneath the waters of the Ocean (26^{5}), furnished with gates and bars (17^{16} 38^{17}); a land of thick darkness (10^{21}), the house prepared for the shades of all men (30^{23}), good and bad (3^{17} 14^{13}), great and small (3^{18}), where all are in a state of somnolence or semi-consciousness (3^{13}), a condition from which there is no prospect of deliverance (7^{9} $10^{20f.}$ $14^{7ff.}$ $17^{13ff.}$). To the healthy and happy the thought of Sheol was always gloomy and forbidding; only to the sick and wretched did its unbroken and profound repose seem better than life.

14 Great men are there, who built **waste places** (חָרְבוֹת) **for themselves.** So the RV as well as the AV reads, but the sense is not good. What seems wanted is a word for the memorials of themselves which great men erect on earth, but which do not profit them in the unseen world. Ewald (followed by Duhm and Budde) suggested 'pyramids' (Arab. *hirām* or *ahrām*), while Cheyne would read 'everlasting sepulchres' (קִבְרוֹת עוֹלָם); Beer, 'palaces' (הֵיכָלוֹת); Böttcher, 'squares' (רְחֹבוֹת).

15 **Who filled their houses with silver.** As it was commonly believed that treasures were buried in the graves of princes, some interpret 'houses' (בָּתֵּיהֶם) as tombs; but the word more naturally suggests palaces.

16 **Or as an hidden untimely birth.** Another morbid fancy: better to have been born dead and at once buried (Vulg. *abortivum absconditum*).

17–19 Here the voice, which has risen high in fierce malediction of life, lowers and softens to praise the peace of Sheol, where there is an end of all trouble and weariness, toil and bondage. The wicked cease from agitating themselves by their evil passions,—'from troubling others' is a possible but less probable sense,—the toiling captives (prisoners of war) do not hear the threatening voice of the taskmaster, and the slave obtains his freedom at last. 19^{a} should read, 'The small and the great are there **the same**.'

20 From meditation on the peace of Sheol the sufferer's mind is soon forced back to the misery of his earthly existence, and he renews his plaintive questioning. 20^{a} should read, **Wherefore doth he give light?** The speaker still avoids the divine name, all the instincts of a lifetime holding him back from

challenging his Maker. **And life unto the bitter in soul.** The adjective, being plural (מָרֵי), refers not merely to Job, but to all who are doomed like him to a life of misery, and for whose pains he has now a keener sensibility. If it is true that 'Derb ist des Lebens innerster Kern,' why is life inflicted upon man at all?' 'This *Wherefore* is the kernel of the first lament of Job, which is not a declaration of innocence, or a complaint, or a murmuring against God, but a bitter and anxious cry, Wherefore? Were his fate not hidden from him he would bear it boldly, and put Satan to shame.'[1]

21[b] Read, **And dig for it** (death) **more than those who dig for hidden treasures.** This rendering, suggested by the LXX, is preferable to 'more than (they themselves dig) for hidden treasures.' On the infatuation of treasure-seekers, see Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 112 f.

22 The miserable **rejoice unto exultation . . . when they can find the grave.** Yet 'the thought of suicide does not occur to Job, nor did it occur to the poet; it appears to be more natural to the Indo-German than to the Semite.'[2]

23 **a man whose way is hid.** Job has lost the path of life, for **God**—the name is spoken at last—has surrounded him with an impenetrable hedge. Light without liberty is a poor boon! The problem of the drama is, Will Job ever find a way through or over the hedge into spiritual freedom? It scarcely needs to be observed that the fence of which he complains is very different from the one which the Satan saw around the saint (1[10]). That was a protecting, this is an imprisoning, hedge.

24 'For my sighing cometh before I eat.' This gives no good sense. Read, **For my sighing cometh like my meat** (marg.), *i.e.* it is my daily fare (cf. Ps 42[3]).

25 Read, **'For the thing which I fear overtaketh me,'** etc. As [26a] is too long and [26b] too short, 'Neither have I rest' should be the beginning of the second line. **But trouble cometh.** The noun 'trouble' (רֹגֶז, disquiet, tumult) stands last in the Heb., and is the prevailing note of this whole first speech. Of sin to be confessed, Job has not had a word to say. The burden of his utterance has been the thought that for one so

[1] Duhm, *New World*, 1894, p. 335. [2] Duhm, *Hiob*, 23.

unhappy it would be better to die, it would have been best, indeed, never to have been born. But 'now the poet lets us hear what the theology of his time has to say of such unhappiness.'[1]

IV.–V.

MAN CANNOT BE JUST BEFORE GOD.

1 Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,
2 If one assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?
But who can withhold himself from speaking?
3 Behold, thou hast instructed many,
And thou hast strengthened the weak hands.
4 Thy words have upholden him that was falling,
And thou hast confirmed the [1]feeble knees.
5 But now it is come unto thee, and thou [2]faintest;
It toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.
6 Is not thy fear *of God* thy confidence,
And thy hope the integrity of thy ways?
7 Remember, I pray thee, who *ever* perished, being innocent?
Or where were the upright cut off?
8 According as I have seen, they that plow iniquity,
And sow [3]trouble, reap the same.
9 By the breath of God they perish,
And by the blast of his anger are they consumed.
10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion,
And the teeth of the young lions, are broken.
11 The old lion perisheth for lack of prey,
And the whelps of the lioness are scattered abroad.
12 Now a thing was [4]secretly brought to me,
And mine ear received a whisper thereof.
13 In thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falleth on men,
14 Fear came upon me, and trembling,
Which made all my bones to shake.
15 Then [5]a spirit passed before my face;
The hair of my flesh stood up.
16 It stood still, but I could not discern the appearance thereof;
A form was before mine eyes:
[6]*There was* silence, and I heard a voice, *saying*,

[1] Duhm, *Hiob*, 24.

17 Shall mortal man [7]be more just than God?
Shall a man [8]be more pure than his Maker?
18 Behold, he putteth no trust in his servants;
And his angels he chargeth with folly:
19 How much more them that dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Which are crushed [9]before the moth!
20 [10]Betwixt morning and evening they are [11]destroyed:
They perish for ever without any regarding it.
21 [12]Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them?
They die, and that without wisdom.
V. 1 Call now; is there any that will answer thee?
And to which of the [13]holy ones wilt thou turn?
2 For vexation killeth the foolish man,
And [14]jealousy slayeth the silly one.
3 I have seen the foolish taking root:
But suddenly I cursed his habitation.
4 His children are far from safety,
And they are crushed in the gate,
Neither is there any to deliver them.
5 Whose harvest the hungry eateth up,
And taketh it even out of the thorns,
And [15]the snare gapeth for their substance.
6 For [16]affliction cometh not forth of the dust,
Neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;
7 But man is born unto trouble,
As [17]the sparks fly upward.
8 But as for me, I would seek unto God,
And unto God would I commit my cause:
9 Which doeth great things and unsearchable;
Marvellous things without number:
10 Who giveth rain upon the earth,
And sendeth waters upon the fields:
11 So that he setteth up on high those that be low;
And those which mourn are exalted to safety.
12 He frustrateth the devices of the crafty,
So that their hands [18]cannot perform their enterprise.
13 He taketh the wise in their own craftiness:
And the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.
14 They meet with darkness in the day-time,
And grope at noonday as in the night.
15 But he saveth from the sword [19]of their mouth,
Even the needy from the hand of the mighty.
16 So the poor hath hope,
And iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

17 Behold, happy is the man whom God [20]correcteth:
Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.
18 For he maketh sore, and bindeth up;
He woundeth, and his hands make whole.
19 He shall deliver thee in six troubles;
Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.
20 In famine he shall redeem thee from death;
And in war from the power of the sword.
21 Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue;
Neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.
22 At destruction and dearth thou shalt laugh;
Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.
23 For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field;
And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.
24 And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace;
And thou shalt visit thy [21]fold, and [22]shalt miss nothing.
25 Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great,
And thine offspring as the grass of the earth.
26 Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,
Like as a shock of corn cometh in in its season.
27 Lo this, we have searched it, so it is;
Hear it, and know thou it [23]for thy good.

[1] Heb. *bowing.* [2] Or, *art grieved* [3] Or, *mischief*
[4] Heb. *brought by stealth.* [5] Or, *a breath passed over*
[6] Or, *I heard a still voice* [7] Or, *be just before God*
[8] Or, *be pure before his Maker* [9] Or, *like*
[10] Or, *From morning to evening* [11] Heb. *broken in pieces.*
[12] Or, *Is not their excellency which is in them removed?*
[13] See ch. 15^{15}. [14] Or, *indignation*
[15] According to many ancient versions, *the thirsty swallow up.*
[16] Or, *iniquity* See ch. 4^{8}. [17] Heb. *the sons of flame* or *of lightning.*
[18] Or, *can perform nothing of worth*
[19] Heb. *out of their mouth.* [20] Or, *reproveth* [21] Or, *habitation*
[22] Or, *shalt not err* [23] Heb. *for thyself.*

Eliphaz is the wisest, most considerate, and, as he speaks first, probably the oldest of Job's three friends. 'He is a stately personage with a wider range of vision than his colleagues.'[1] He has been brought into closer intercourse than ordinary men with the unseen world, and his argument is largely based on a divine oracle with which he has been favoured. He has his preconceived ideas of the cause of suffering, which naturally make it difficult for him to reconcile Job's calamities with his former high opinion of him. But there is not a little to admire

[1] Moulton, 26.

in his speech. Beginning in a soft, subdued tone, and speaking all through in what is meant to be a gracious and conciliatory strain, he does everything in his power to spare the sufferer's feelings without being unfaithful to his own sacred convictions. He cannot conceal his surprise that Job, who has instructed and comforted many others in their time of grief and pain, should himself faint under affliction. He reminds him of the cheering fact that while the innocent may suffer they never perish. As he proceeds, it becomes clear that he is not bound by the rigid and extreme doctrine of proportionate retribution, for he regards Job's affliction as a test or ordeal, and Job himself as a sincerely pious man, though no doubt tainted with that general human sinfulness which, apart from individual and special transgressions, is amply sufficient to account for life's gravest calamities and to make every man humbly penitent before God. He tells of a strange vision vouchsafed to him for the purpose, as he believed, of deeply impressing on his mind the fact that no man is righteous before God. Holding this principle, he cannot but regard impatience as the symptom of a heart not right with heaven. It is not suffering itself, but its effect upon the sufferer, which is the index of a man's true character. Fools seal their own doom by giving way to vexation. But let Job, suppressing the violence of his complaints, and refraining from all censures, implicit or explicit, of providence, commit his cause to God, who exalts the lowly, and everything will yet be well with him. Assuming that this advice will certainly be followed, the eloquent speaker excels himself in painting an idyllic picture of the returning felicity which he predicts for his friend.

The discourse is a remarkable performance, brilliant throughout in its phrasing, and rising artistically to a noble climax. It presents not a few great and impressive ideas clothed in exquisite diction. But it has several serious blemishes. It does not contain a single word of genuine sympathy. Though addressed to a friend in the extremity of tragic sorrow, it betrays no sense of the *lacrymae rerum*. It breaks the seven days' silence with the words, not of a comforter but of a moralist, not of a tender-hearted friend but of a theologian chilled by his creed. As if grief had not its sacred rights, it solemnly chides

the instinctive language of despair. Ignoring Job's heroic and almost superhuman long-suffering, it fastens upon the impropriety of his outcry under a weight of misery grown insupportable. It fails to realise that a man's execrations of life may be but the surface waves of his despair, while the hidden depth of it is the feeling (to Job the fact) that he has fallen from the love of God, who has hidden His face from him. Lofty, dignified, and studiously courteous as the words of Eliphaz are; full of reverence for a God before whom all creatures, angels and men alike, are erring; calculated to reconcile a sufferer to his lot and gently lead him to a sense of its real cause: the discourse is yet hopelessly irrelevant and therefore utterly futile. Eliphaz does not apprehend the real poignancy of the situation. He does not perceive that it is a new problem which is torturing Job—the problem of suffering innocence. To cure the hurt of such a mind with the simples of an antiquated theology is impossible. Job and the world need a new book of comfort, and Eliphaz is scarcely the person to write it.

2 **If one assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?** Eliphaz begins with a half-apology for venturing a word with Job at all in circumstances so painful, pleading that he is impelled by an irresistible sense of duty. Since speak he must, he would fain do it with great considerateness, avoiding any word that might hurt the feelings of his stricken friend. The word for 'to be grieved' (לָאָה) usually means 'to be wearied' (16^{7}); in 4^{5} it appears as 'thou faintest'; here it probably means 'to be vexed' or 'impatient.'

3–5 **thou hast instructed.** Eliphaz reminds Job that in the happy past he was wont to teach the afflicted how to accept the will of Heaven, and expresses his disappointment that the instructor of others should himself faint at the touch of calamity. It would be unfair to Eliphaz to assume that there is an accent of irony in his words, as if he meant to suggest that Job had found patience and resignation an easy lesson to preach, but could not make the application when it was his own need that came in question. His surprise and concern are obviously sincere. But when he says, **It toucheth thee, and thou art troubled,** one would really imagine that Job had broken down as soon as misfortune (the indefinite **it**) had lightly laid a finger

on him; and the words **thou faintest** (וַתִּלְאֶה), **thou art troubled** (וַתִּבָּהֵל), very distinctly strike the wrong notes of blame and reproof. **strengthened the weak hands . . . confirmed the feeble knees.** Hands hanging down, relaxed (רָפוֹת), are a sign of discouragement and fear; knees tottering (כֹּרְעוֹת) indicate that the burdens of life are too heavy to carry (cf. Is 35^3, He 12^{12}). Eliphaz knows that in past days Job used his strength to help the feeble. 'Feet was I to the lame,' says Job himself (29^{15}).

6 **Is not thy fear** (of God) **thy confidence? Fear** (with the Object unexpressed), as a technical term for religion or piety, is one of Eliphaz's characteristic words (15^4 22^4). At this stage he does not doubt Job's **integrity** (תֹּם), and his view is that, since his friend is really a religious man, he may anticipate a happy issue out of his troubles, and should not give way to feelings of despair.

7 Eliphaz admits that afflictions come even to a good man, but **who *ever* perished, being innocent?** On that point he appeals confidently to Job's experience. As it was a rooted conviction of the three friends that the righteous were never **cut off**, *i.e.* never died suddenly, prematurely, or unnaturally, they were shocked to hear Job's passionate cry for death to come and end his woes, for a miserable end was to them a demonstration of God's wrath against an impenitent sinner.

8–11 When Eliphaz says that men **reap** the iniquity which they **plow** and **sow** (cf. Pr 22^8, Hos 8^7 10^{13}, Gal $6^{7.8}$), the application of his proverb is not at once obvious. Does he mean to comfort Job by contrasting him, or to warn him by comparing him, with the workers of iniquity? The context indicates that the former must be his intention. And when he likens the fate of the wicked to the destruction of a den of lions, he cannot possibly mean that Job's dead sons are the **young lions** whose voices are silenced. Duhm wishes to strike out v.^{8} as unsymmetrical and prosaic, and vv.$^{9-11}$ as irrelevant. The construction of v.^{10} is extremely awkward, and the accumulation of names for the lion—there are five in these verses—is like the work of an inferior artist.

12–17 While Eliphaz feels that in order to silence Job's

complaints against providence he must arouse his sense of sin, he tactfully avoids personalities, and braces himself to prove the sinfulness, not of an individual, but of all humanity before a just and holy God. This truth was impressed for ever on his own mind by a supernatural experience, the awe of which he feels once more as he describes it. His vision resembles those of the patriarchs in Genesis rather than those of the prophets. In the dead of night, while he lay in a trance-sleep, such as sometimes falls upon specially favoured men, and while his mind was agitated by thoughts suggested by visions, a sudden fear seized him and he became conscious that he was not alone. A spirit passed before his face making his flesh creep, and stood still before his eyes, a vague impalpable form, while a voice which was but a whisper said, 'Shall mortal man be righteous before God?' Opinions differ as to the artistic merit of this passage, which Cheyne [1] calls the most weird in the OT. One admirable critic says: 'Eliphaz is partly a rhetorician, and, like all persons with that gift, he is frequently carried off his feet and ceases to touch the firm earth. His famous vision in the night, which caused the hair of his flesh to stand up, is an exaggeration, and does nothing but declare what might as well have been declared without it, that man is not just in the eyes of perfect purity.' [2] Another interpreter, however, calls it 'the most ancient, the finest and most impressive, description of a spiritual apparition ever penned.' [3] Burke's words [4] are suggestive: 'There is a passage in the book of Job amazingly sublime, but this sublimity is principally due to the terrible uncertainty of the thing described. . . . We are first prepared with the utmost solemnity for the vision; we are first terrified, before we are let even into the obscure cause of our emotion: but when this grand cause of terror makes its appearance, what is it? Is it not wrapt up in the shades of its own incomprehensible darkness, more awful, more striking, more terrible, than the liveliest description, than the clearest painting, could possibly represent it?'

12 **Now a thing was secretly brought to me.** Rather, a **word**, the context showing that a word of God, a revelation, is meant. The verb (יְגֻנַּב), trans. 'was secretly brought,' means

[1] *Job and Solomon*, 19.
[2] *Mark Rutherford*, 278.
[3] Cox, 82.
[4] *Works* (Bell), i. 93.

that the message came *stealing* on the ear. It was but a **whisper**, yet every word was audible, and made a deeper impression on the mind than a voice of thunder.

13 **When deep sleep falleth on men.** It is a question whether Eliphaz was awake (Ewald, Cox, Peake) or asleep Delitzsch, Duhm) when he saw the apparition. The latter is the natural view if **deep sleep** (תַּרְדֵּמָה) means, as it usually does, a trance-sleep—a kind of hypnotic state in which the sense-world recedes and the spirit-world comes near. Cf. the trance-sleep of Abraham (Gn 15^{12}), with the horror of great darkness and the divine voice which followed it. As the trance-sleep was supposed to be divinely induced, it is nearly always said to 'fall' on men, *i.e.* on specially gifted men, seers, among whom Eliphaz reckons himself. The other interpretation is that Eliphaz is contrasting his own waking state with that of the sleeping world around him, on which ordinary deep slumber has fallen.

14 **Fear came upon me, and trembling.** The remarkable thing is that it came *before* the object of fear. It was the panic fear which seizes the heart at the approach of the supernatural, a fear which some of the lower animals are said to share.

15, 16 **Then a spirit** (רוּחַ) **passed before my face.** Better, **passes.** Here Eliphaz's impressions become so vivid that he unconsciously uses the present instead of the past tense. It is doubtful whether we should read **a spirit** (Ewald, Duhm) or a **breath** (Davidson, Dillmann). The mystery may have first made its presence felt as a breath of cold wind passing over the seer's face. But if the *ruaḥ* was a breath, then '**it**' is left without a subject —a vague nameless *something*. The other interpretation [1] seems better. The terrified seer could not make out the appearance of the visitant, though a certain **form** stood before his straining eyes. In the Heb. the single word for **It stood** forms a line by itself. Is this due to a corruption of the text, or was it deliberately intended by the poet to heighten the sense of mystery? Accident or art, the result, as Duhm remarks, is worthy of a Shakespearean monologue. **I heard a still voice**: lit. 'Stillness and a voice I heard,' which makes a hendiadys. Cf. the 'still small voice' which Elijah heard at Horeb (1 K 19^{12}).

[1] See Blake's Ninth Illustration.

17 **Shall mortal man be more just than God?** Though this rendering is grammatically possible, and has been retained by the RV, it is singularly unfortunate; for Job has not suggested that he is more just than God, and no awful oracle is needed to convince him of the folly and impiety of such an idea. But since he has bemoaned his misery as if he were **just before God** and did not deserve his sufferings, Eliphaz wishes to end his complaint by convincing him that no man can be righteous and pure in his Maker's sight. Read as in marg., **Shall mortal man be just before God?**

18 **Behold, he putteth no trust in his servants.** The parallelism implies that **servants** and **angels** are synonymous. *All* angels are as yet regarded as imperfect, and liable to be charged with folly, the distinction between good and bad angels belonging to a later stage. The word for **folly** (תָּהֳלָה) occurs only here, and is traced by Dillmann to an Ethiopic root.

19 Eliphaz uses the *a fortiori* argument. If angels, spiritual beings, are blameworthy, **how much more** are men, who are tenants of houses of clay (cf. 2 Co 5^{1})—formed out of the dust (Gn 2^{7} 3^{19}). Eliphaz has a deep sense of the inherent corruption of all human beings, and of their consequent liability to be punished by the Creator. Who is so perfect as to be able to claim exemption from suffering? 'Such Calvinism before Calvin as this, which reappears more than once in the friend's argument, is the hardest blow directed at Job's sturdy consciousness of innocence.'[1] **Which are crushed before the moth.** Men are crushed sooner than the moth, or (with LXX) like the moth. The line is metrically superfluous, and is struck out by Bickell.

20 **Betwixt morning and evening they are destroyed.** They are only ephemerids. Cf. Is 38^{12}, and Gray's words:

> 'Alike the busy and the gay,
> But flutter through life's little day.'

21^{a} **Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them?** Death is compared to the fall of a tent whose supporting cord is removed. The LXX has 'He bloweth upon them, and they are withered' (Is 40^{24}), which is probably a substitute for a corrupt and im-

[1] Genung, 40.

possible text. 21^b The last mark of men's unhappy condition is that they die without having attained **wisdom**, the chief good.

V. 1 **to which of the holy ones wilt thou turn?** The angels, who have just been characterised as imperfect (4^{18}), are called **holy** because they are God's ministers. The term was at first ethically neutral. It occurs to Eliphaz that Job may, in his perplexity and despair, think of crying to some of the angels for help, as if appealing to them against the judgment of God. It is true that this is a pure assumption, being based on nothing that Job has said; but the idea of angelic mediation was prevalent (see 33^{28}, cf. Zec 1^{12}), and it was natural enough that Eliphaz, before advising Job to commit his cause to God (v.^{8}), should first bid him dismiss the thought of any other supernatural aid.

2 **For vexation killeth the foolish man.** Impatience or resentment (כַּעַשׂ) under affliction, marking a man out as morally senseless and stupid, incurs the guilt and merits the death of a **fool** (אֱוִיל). The speaker's use of this word **vexation** evidently stings Job, for he refers to it in the first line of his reply (6^2). For 'jealousy' read **indignation** (marg.). The word (קִנְאָה) denotes the heat or ardour of any of the emotions—zeal, anger, jealousy, love—the context indicating which.

3 Eliphaz cites from personal experience the case of a foolish man who began to prosper, but whose house he **suddenly cursed.** His meaning is somewhat difficult to grasp. He would scarcely claim credit for uttering a literal curse, and so (as curses were spells) bringing the house to ruin; while to suppose him to mean that when he saw the fallen house he suddenly (why suddenly?) pronounced it accursed, is not grammatically legitimate. It is better to read with the LXX, '**And suddenly his house became rotten** (וַיִּרָקֵב for וָאֶקּוֹב). Making a further slight change, Cheyne would read, 'Suddenly his branch became rotten.' Budde suggests 'his house was empty' (וְרֵקָם); Wright, 'perished' (וַיֵּעָבֵר).

4 **they are crushed in the gate.** The Gate (שַׁעַר) of the town is the Eastern place of justice, where, however, the friendless children of the poor have small chance of redress against the rich and powerful. For metrical reasons Bickell and Duhm strike out 'at the Gate,' reducing 4^b and 4^c (both too short)

to one line, 'And they are crushed, with none to deliver them.' Man's maladministration of justice would be no evidence of God's punishment of fools.

$5^{b, c}$ **out of the thorns.** Perhaps the meaning is that thievish nomads break through the thorn hedges to plunder the foolish man's field. But it is difficult to get any sense out of the line, which Bickell and others omit as metrically superfluous. **And the snare gapeth for their substance** (וְשָׁאַף צְמִיתִם): but a more vivid and touching detail is needed to form a parallel to 5^{a} and complete the picture of desolation. Making some textual changes, Duhm reads, 'And the thirsty drink from their well (וְשָׁאַב צְמָא מְקֻלָּם), and Beer, 'And the thirsty drink their milk' (חַלְבָּם).

6, 7 **For affliction cometh not forth of the dust, etc.** Scholars have offered a bewildering variety of translations for these verses. The word for **is born** admits of five different punctuations, with as many meanings; while the words trans. **sparks** (lit. 'sons of flame') have also been interpreted as demons (Targum), angels, lightning flashes, burning arrows, and blind zealots. The meaning which the RV seems to get out of the verses is that man must not suppose affliction to come uncaused, as weeds grow unsown out of the ground, for his own heart is the seat of evil, and he therefore brings all trouble upon himself, so that he has no right to complain, suffering being as much a law of life as the ascent of sparks is a law of nature. Professor Peake ingeniously suggests the omission of the negatives in v.^{6}, and thus arrives at the meaning that, since trouble does spring from the dust, therefore man is doomed to it; but the angels escape, since they soar high above earth. Wellhausen and some other critics omit the whole quatrain. Eliphaz does not hold the old cheerful doctrine that the righteous are immune from suffering. His belief is that whereas man, born of a woman (15^{14}), and dwelling in a habitation of clay, *i.e.* a human body (4^{19}), is too weak not to sin and too guilty not to suffer, he never has the right to complain of suffering too much, God alone being able to determine the quantum of the offence and to inflict the merited punishment.

8–16 Having sounded the necessary notes of warning against impatience under affliction, Eliphaz in a more cheerful spirit

advises Job to commit his cause to God, who is so great and wise that He will not be at a loss how to deal with it, difficult and perplexing though it is. All God's activity in the world has a certain well-defined double purpose—the exaltation of the lowly and the frustration of the purposes of the crafty.

8–13 If Eliphaz were in the sufferer's place, it would be **unto God** (אֶל־אֵל) that he would pray, **unto the Godhead** (אֶל־אֱלֹהִים) that he would unreservedly entrust his cause. The repetition of the emphatic words is impressive. Let Job be prayerful and believing; let him assume that he has unwittingly incurred the divine displeasure; let him be submissive to the divine will. In the attributes of God, Eliphaz finds encouragement to prayer and faith. God is powerful, doing great things; kind, giving rain; and just, exalting the lowly and scattering the proud.

11 **So that he setteth up.** This seems to convey the idea that the watering of the earth (v.[10]) is the means by which God sets up the lowly. Read, **Setting up,** which makes the new clause parallel to, but independent of, what has gone before.

12 **So that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.** Better, 'cannot achieve success.' The word for success, *tushiyyah* (תּוּשִׁיָּה), is a technical term in the Wisdom Literature, denoting either sound, efficient wisdom, or the outcome of such wisdom, abiding success.

13[a] This line is quoted in 1 Co 3[19], the only NT citation from Job.

14 **And grope at noonday as in the night.** In the West these words would be suggestive of the phenomena of a city fog, but to Hebrew readers they probably recalled such incidents as are described in Gn 19[11], 2 K 6[18-20]. Groping in darkness at noon is a figure of the helpless bewilderment of the cunning, even in the simplest affairs, when their schemes are thwarted by God.

15 The absence of parallelism suggests something wrong with the text, and the lit. rendering, 'He saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth,' is very awkward. Various emendations have been suggested, of which Siegfried's is the best: 'He saveth the needy from the sword, And the poor from the hand of the mighty.'

17–27 The **Behold** which Eliphaz here interjects indicates that his imagination begins to glow, and few passages even in this poem are finer than his description of the returning prosperity which awaits the afflicted servant of God who does not murmur or complain beneath the chastening rod. We must not, however, read into his speech more than it contains. Some scholars[1] believe that he endeavours to comfort Job by teaching him the purifying, ennobling function of suffering, and with his language in v.[5] they compare Pr $3^{11.12}$ and He $12^{5.6}$. It does not appear, however, that any of the three friends view suffering as a *discipline* (as Elihu certainly does); at the most they think of it as a *probation*, a test of character or disposition. Regarding God as a magnified Oriental Potentate, before whose anger His subjects must be dumb and submissive, they counsel the afflicted man to prostrate himself in the dust and keep silent, and promise him that all will then be well; for he will not only be delivered out of his troubles, but made richer and happier than ever. Their piety (which is their policy) consists in abject submission to the arbitrary will of divine omnipotence.

17 **happy is the man.** Eliphaz does not teach, like Elihu (ch. 34), that affliction is a proof of love on God's part, and pregnant with moral benefits to man. The comfort he really offers is the assurance that affliction, which is a chastisement for sin, and therefore a proof of divine anger, will, if received in a spirit of meek subservience, soon pass away and sorrow be changed into joy. The chastening of Shaddai is not despised when a man humbles himself under His mighty hand. Eliphaz congratulates the sufferer because his trouble will speedily give place to affluence and prosperity; Elihu, because trouble itself ennobles and purifies the sufferer's character.

18 **he maketh sore, and bindeth up.** The 'Celestial Surgeon'—to use Stevenson's phrase—who employs the lancet will next dress the wound. The language is as exquisite in simple beauty, but, in this context, also as lacking in moral depth, as the poetry which Hosea (6^{1}) puts into the mouths of the shallow optimists of Northern Israel.

19 **in six troubles; Yea, in seven.** An instance of ascend-

[1] *e.g.* Delitzsch, Dillmann, Davidson.

ing enumeration. The meaning is 'in all possible cases'; cf. Am $1^{3f.}$, Mic 5^{5}, Pr 6^{16}.

21 **the scourge of the tongue.** In an enumeration of evils which includes famine, war, and wild beasts, a reference to calumny seems strange. For 'the tongue' Duhm suggests 'pestilence,' and thus gets the same four plagues as are mentioned in Ezk 5^{17} 14^{21}.

21, 22 **Neither shalt thou be afraid.** This is right in ^{21b}, but ought to be changed into **And thou needest not be afraid** in ^{22b}. The first statement is purely objective, the second gives expression to the subjective feeling of the speaker. The difference lies in the use of two negatives (לֹא in ^{21b}, אַל in ^{22b}; see Davidson's *Syntax*, 174).

23 **in league with the stones of the field.** The harmony of nature with man when he is at peace with God is a common theme of Hebrew prophets and poets. Examples are found in Ps 91 and Isaiah's idyllic picture of the coming golden age (11^{6-9}). **stones of the field.** According to Rashi there was an older reading, 'lords of the field' (אֲדֹנֵי for אַבְנֵי), satyrs or desert demons, creations of popular fancy (cf. Lv 17^{7}).

24 **and shalt miss nothing.** No thief or wild beast will have broken into the fold to steal. The verb (חָטָא), which has here its root meaning 'to miss,' usually signifies 'to sin,' the sinner being one who misses the mark or the way.

25 **thy seed shall be great.** A numerous offspring was one of Heaven's blessings to the righteous man (Ps 128^{3}). How strange this detail would seem to Job, who could not forget, as the eloquent speaker evidently does, that he was bereft of all his children! Duhm detects a quiet irony in the mind of the poet, who lets Eliphaz expound his conventional doctrine without regard to reality.

26 **Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age.** The obscure word for **full age** (כֶּלַח), which is found only here and in 30^{2}, probably means firm strength (from an Arab. root). The righteous man has a vigorous body, with powers unimpaired to the last, when he is peacefully gathered in like a sheaf of corn. There is a promise of all conceivable blessings on this side of the grave, but of nothing beyond. The absence of a

belief in immortality is one of the presuppositions of the drama.

27 **Lo this, we have searched it . . . know thou it for thy good.** The concluding note of self-importance could not but jar upon the sufferer, who needed a sympathising friend rather than a pedantic theorist. The enthusiasm of Eliphaz is that of a practitioner over a difficult but not hopeless case, the successful treatment of which will bring honour to himself; or of a preacher who makes his friend a text for the enunciation of a solemn falsehood which he takes to be gospel truth. No wonder that, as a physician, Eliphaz only irritated the wounds he intended to heal; as a preacher, he offered 'empty chaff well meant for grain.'

VI. 1–13.

THE RIGHT TO COMPLAIN.

1 Then Job answered and said,
2 Oh that my vexation were but weighed,
And my calamity laid in the balances together!
3 For now it would be heavier than the sand of the seas:
Therefore have my words been rash.
4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me,
The poison whereof my spirit drinketh up:
The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.
5 Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass?
Or loweth the ox over his fodder?
6 Can that which hath no savour be eaten without salt?
Or is there any taste in [1]the white of an egg?
7 [2]My soul refuseth to touch *them*;
They are as loathsome meat to me.
8 Oh that I might have my request;
And that God would grant *me* the thing that I long for!
9 Even that it would please God to crush me;
That he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!
10 Then should I yet have comfort;
[3]Yea, I would [4]exult in pain [5]that spareth not:
[6]For I have not [7]denied the words of the Holy One.
11 What is my strength, that I should wait?
And what is mine end, that I should be patient?

12 Is my strength the strength of stones?
Or is my flesh of brass?
13 Is it not that I have no help in me,
And that [8]effectual working is driven quite from me?

[1] Or, *the juice of purslain*
[2] Or, What things *my soul refused to touch, these are as my loathsome meat*
[3] Or, *Though I shrink back*
[4] Or, *harden myself*
[5] Or, *though he spare not*
[6] Or, *That*
[7] Or, *concealed*
[8] Or, *sound wisdom*

Eliphaz has expressed his surprise at Job's hopeless despair, has deprecated murmuring under affliction, and characterised impatience as a mark of folly or impiety. That this language, though used by the most tactful of speakers, has sorely wounded Job, is proved by the opening words of his reply. He feels that he has not been treated fairly or generously. His impatience has been coolly and critically weighed, but not his unparalleled misery. If only his impatience and his suffering were placed in opposite scales, the one would not be found excessive, for the other is immeasurable—heavier than the sand of the sea. If his words have been wild, which he does not deny, it has not been outward pain and loss, but the arrows of the Almighty, the terrors of God, that have forced from him cries of anguish. If even the lower animals do not complain without a cause, surely no more does a reasonable man. But at this point Job forgets that he is defending himself, and, driven to distraction by a sense of his loathsome misery, utters a frenzied cry for death. If he might but feel one pang more, this time a crushing blow from the hand that has struck him so often, he would exult in unsparing pain. What else has he to hope for, since disease has exhausted his strength, and death alone can end his intolerable misery?

2 **Oh that my vexation were but weighed.** Job's demeanour under affliction—his **impatience** (כַּעַשׂ)—is what has been fastened upon for criticism. His plea is that another thing has not been considered—his tremendous **calamity** (הַוָּה, probably a textual error for הַוַּה), which is a comprehensive word for all his troubles. Let this be weighed against his impatience, and it will be seen that there is more than enough to justify his wild words of anguish. **laid in the balances together.** The meaning

may be, either, Let the impatience and the calamity be weighed together, to see which is greater, or, Let the *whole* calamity be weighed. The former gives the better sense.

3 **heavier than the sand of the seas.** It was proverbial (Pr 27^3) that the fool's vexation was heavier than the sand—infinite in weight, intolerable. Job's contention is that in his case it is to the affliction, not to the consequent impatience, that such language is applicable. **Therefore have my words been rash.** Job does not deny that his words **have been wild** (לָעַע, a word found only here), but surely they are not inexcusable. When the poisoned arrows of the Almighty are fevering his blood, is it strange if some of his utterances are extravagant and delirious?

4 **the arrows of the Almighty.** Hamlet complained that he had to bear the slings and arrows of outrageous *fortune*, but the Hebrew sufferer was compelled to trace his misery to a personal source. It was a first principle of his theology that calamities were due to the anger of God, and in particular that diseases and plagues were the arrows with which He, as a warrior, smote His victims. What Job says in 4^b is not that the poison of the arrows drinks up his spirit, rendering him impotent (AV), but that his spirit drinks up the poison, which makes him restless, impetuous (RV). The third line of the verse contains a military metaphor; but some scholars, transposing two consonants (reading עָכַר for עָרְךְ), read, 'The terrors of God **do trouble me**,' while others follow the LXX, which has 'do goad me' (κεντοῦσί με = יַעֲרְקוּנִי). See, further, on v.7.

5 The lower animals do not complain when all their wants are supplied; and when a rational being murmurs, would it not be fairer to conclude that there must be an adequate cause, than to sum him up as a weak and querulous egoist?

6 **Can that which hath no savour be eaten without salt?** It is a question what Job finds so savourless, whether his own life of misery and shame, or the platitudes of his friends. As he is justifying his demeanour under adversity, while the quality of the arguments he is plied with does not yet seem to be before his mind, the former is the natural interpretation. Duhm, however, prefers the latter—that the nauseous and loathsome

food is the wisdom of Eliphaz, and thinks that 'the poet thus marks Job's (and his own) antipathy to the cheap consolations of people who do not themselves know what suffering is, and at the same time his determination to be guided by his natural instinct.' For **white of egg** some would read 'juice of purslain' (marg.).

7 It is very difficult to construe these lines, which Bickell strikes out. Duhm would connect 7^{a} with 4^{c}, and read, 'The terrors of the Lord do trouble me, And my soul refuseth to be quieted.' He deletes 7^{b}.

8–10^{b} Job has become one of those sufferers who are 'more than half in love with easeful death.' If God, whose wrath has already dealt him so many crushing blows, would **let loose his hand** and complete His work, Job would **yet have comfort.** 'Yet' refers to his present forlorn condition, the depths of sorrow in which the only remaining comfort is a *coup de grace.* Job would **exult** (סָלַד, perhaps 'leap,' 'prance,' a word found only here) **in unsparing pain,** if only it would presently let him cease to be.

10^{c} This line fits neither into the metrical scheme nor into the train of ideas. It makes Job, who in his frenzy is longing for the comfort of a sudden death (with God as executioner), contemplate his release with saintly equanimity, on the ground that he has 'not denied the words of the Holy One.' It was probably inserted by some devout scribe, who wished to give Job's 'wild' words a more edifying turn.

11 Job's cry for immediate dissolution is further justified by his hopeless condition.

12 The Second Isaiah (40^{6}) compares all flesh to grass; but Job feels that he would need the strength of rocks and flesh of brass in order to come unscathed through his fiery trial.

13 Read, **Is not my help within me gone, And resource driven away from me?** **Help** and **resource** ('effectual working' is not a happy rendering) both refer to the speaker's vital energy, *vis naturae,* which is so exhausted that he is quite hopeless of ultimate recovery. A miracle might, of course, be wrought, but though the poem is replete with 'things past finding out,' there is a conspicuous absence of miracles in the special sense of the word.

VI. 14–30.

THE FAILURE OF FRIENDS.

14 To him that is ready to faint kindness *should be shewed* from
his friend;
[1]Even to him that forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.
15 My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook,
As the channel of brooks that pass away;
16 Which are black by reason of the ice,
And wherein the snow hideth itself:
17 What time they [2]wax warm, they vanish:
When it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.
18 [3]The caravans *that travel* by the way of them turn aside;
They go up into the waste, and perish.
19 The caravans of Tema looked,
The companies of Sheba waited for them.
20 They were ashamed because they had hoped;
They came thither, and were confounded.
21 For now ye [4]are nothing;
Ye see a terror, and are afraid.
22 Did I say, Give unto me?
Or, Offer a present for me of your substance?
23 Or, Deliver me from the adversary's hand?
Or, Redeem me from the hand of the oppressors?
24 Teach me, and I will hold my peace:
And cause me to understand wherein I have erred.
25 How forcible are words of uprightness!
But what doth your arguing reprove?
26 Do ye imagine to reprove words?
Seeing that the speeches of one that is desperate are [5]as wind.
27 Yea, ye would cast *lots* upon the fatherless,
And make merchandise of your friend.
28 Now therefore be pleased to look upon me;
[6]For surely I shall not lie to your face.
29 Return, I pray you, let there be no injustice;
Yea, return again, [7]my cause is righteous.
30 Is there injustice on my tongue?
Cannot my taste discern mischievous things?

[1] Or, *Else might he forsake* Or, *But he forsaketh*
[2] Or, *shrink* [3] Or, *The paths of their way are turned aside*
[4] Another reading is, *are* like *thereto.*
[5] Or, *for the wind* [6] Or, *And it will be evident unto you if I lie*
[7] Heb. *my righteousness is in it*

Job's friends were animated at first by nothing but the kindliest feelings towards him. They visited him in his sorrow with the sincere desire 'to bemoan him and to comfort him.' If he had confessed himself a sinner and cried for mercy, they would have let their compassion have free course, and shown no inclination to expose the frailties by which he had incurred the displeasure of Heaven. But when they hear him bemoan his fate instead of his sin, their kindly and pitiful looks gradually fade; their faces become shadowed with inquiry and suspicion. The impatient temper of their friend proves that his heart is not right towards God, who must continue to chastise him until he humbly acknowledge his sin and pray for pardon. They are far from being deliberately unkind; but when it comes to choosing between their faith and their friend, they sacrifice their humane feelings in order to keep themselves right with Heaven. They let their attitude be determined by an intellectual theory rather than by brotherly affection. As the guardians of traditions in religion which form a trust they cannot betray, they dare not extend their sympathy to one from whom God is evidently hiding His face. 'They prefer believing that Job, whom they call their friend, is a pretender or deceiver, to admitting the possibility of the falsehood of their hypothesis.' [1]

Job is deeply hurt by his friends' unkindness, though quite unmoved by their arguments. Having built great hopes upon their friendship—looking to it for pity, for solace, for love—he has been keenly disappointed with the hard and critical tone which, after their seven days' silence, they have assumed as soon as he has uttered the anguish of his heart. With a sadness not unmixed with scorn, he compares them to a mountain brook which pours its turbid waters, black with melting ice and snow, down from the heights in spring, only to dry up at the approach of summer, leaving nothing but bare rocks and barren sand for the thirsty travellers who come to it in the hope of finding the water that would save their lives. With bitter irony he suggests to them that he could understand their coldness if he had presumed upon their kindness so far as actually to ask for their material help, since he well knows that friendship is not equal

[1] Froude, 310.

to so severe a strain ; but he has only looked for a few words o tender human sympathy. Then, adopting such a tone of lofty self-consciousness as a man is entitled to use whose good name is imperilled and whose religious sincerity is called in question, he challenges them to say wherein he has erred ; he bids them have done with the unworthy business of captiously criticising mere wild words, that they may concentrate their minds on the real magnitude of his sorrows and help him to grapple with the awful problem which is torturing him ; and finally, with a demand that they should look him in the face, and judge whether he is likely to meet their gaze with a lie on his lips, he fearlessly asserts the innocence of his life and the justice of his cause.

14 **To him that is ready to faint . . . Even to him that is forsaking the fear of the Almighty.** This verse raises difficulties. There is force in the objection that Job never even hypothetically calls himself an apostate, and, further, the idea of an obligation still to love a pervert clashes too violently with OT sentiment. The ancient versions suggest another reading, 'He that withholdeth kindness from the despairing, forsaketh the fear of the Almighty' (Vulg. 'qui tollit ab amico suo misericordiam'). The aphorism is probably not an utterance of the poet, but a reader's severe comment upon the conduct of the friends, first written on the margin and afterwards incorporated in the text.

15 **My friends . . . as a brook.** In a book which is full of beautiful similes carefully wrought out, none is finer than this in which Job expresses his disappointment with his friends. The RV reads, **the channel of brooks that pass away.** This gives a possible sense ; but what the figure rather requires is **overflow**—another meaning of the verb (יַעַבְרוּ)—the *wadies* being first described in their fullness and then in their emptiness.

17 **What time they wax warm, they vanish.** Job, who had plenty of friends in the happy time when he scarcely felt the want of them, finds to his consternation that they disappear 'like a summer-dried fountain when his need is the sorest.' Thirsting for the living waters of sympathy, he is offered the arid sands of dogma.

18 **The caravans turn . . . aside ; They go up into the**

waste, and perish. Seeing nothing but an empty torrent-bed, the travellers hurriedly leave the beaten track, in the forlorn hope of still finding water somewhere; but their search proves vain, and they fling themselves down to die. The word tr. **caravans** (אֳרְחוֹת) in [19a] must have the same meaning in [18a], for though it often means 'paths' (AV), that does not yield a good sense here.

19 **Tema** lay in North and **Sheba** in South Arabia. In 1^{15} the Sabeans, or dwellers in Sheba, are marauders; here they are traders.

20 **They were ashamed because they had hoped.** The Heb. verb (בּוֹשׁ) expresses not only the sense of shame proper,—to be ashamed of oneself or of others,—but also the feeling of being disappointed, confounded. Cf. Ps 35^{4}, Jer 14^{3} 22^{22}, Ro 5^{5}.

21 Here the sense in doubtful and the text probably corrupt. To read **ye are nothing** is to force a meaning on the Heb. words. The marg. has 'ye are *like* thereto.' With slight changes it is possible to read (as Ewald and Siegfried do), **So have ye become to me.** Most scholars find in [21b] the complex idea that Job's friends dare not be faithful to him because of their servile fear of God; but this does not harmonise with the simple pathos of the passage. Bickell and Duhm strike the verse out.

22, 23 **Did I say, Give unto me?** Had Job been poor and begging for help, or wronged at law and needing vindication, or captive and requiring a ransom, he could have excused the coldness of his friends; for, as he bitterly suggests, he would then have been putting too great a tax on their generosity. But he has, in truth, made no heavy draft upon their goodness; he has not looked for a boundless liberality; he has merely hoped that they would sympathise with him, try to understand him, and, at any rate, not doubt him!

24, 25 **Teach me, and I will hold my peace.** Job desires nothing better than to be taught and reproved by friends whose wounds are faithful (Pr 27^{6}), for he knows **how forcible** are upright words—honest speech, plain dealing—which enlighten the mind and awaken the conscience; but the *a priori* **arguing** of theorists, who assume that he must be a sinner because he is a sufferer, leaves him utterly unimpressed. The meaning

'forcible' or 'effective' is conjectural; making a slight change (נִמְרְצוּ into נִמְלְצוּ, cf. Ps 119^{103}), Cheyne reads **how sweet.**

26 **Do ye imagine to reprove words?** There are rules of debate which no generous disputant ever disregards. It is impossible to get at the truth until men cease from the carping criticism of unconsidered **words**, which are mere froth **for the wind** (marg.) to blow away, and direct their attention to the well-considered utterances which reveal a man's deep and true self, and by which alone he ought to be judged. 'With experience so stern as his, it was not for Job to be calm, and self-possessed, and delicate in his words.'[1]

27 **ye would cast** *lots* **upon the fatherless.** 'Lots' is imported into the text, and 'fatherless' seems unsuitable. Bickell and Duhm read 'Ye fall upon the blameless (תָּם for יָתוֹם), Ye make merchandise of your friend.' He is now no more to you than a debtor to his exacting creditors.

28 **Now therefore be pleased to look upon me.** The time having come for Job solemnly to plead his innocence, he asks, with irresistible directness, that the eyes of his judges may be fixed upon him. A guilty conscience does not welcome such a scrutinising gaze.

29 **Return, I pray you.** 'Return' is probably metaphorical, meaning change your course, seek some other explanation of my troubles than your unjust and unfair presupposition of my guilt. Renan regards it as literal, thinking that the vigour of Job's invectives causes his friends to make a movement as if they were retiring in dudgeon.

30 **Is there injustice on my tongue?** The question is ambiguous, the words meaning either, 'Do I speak impiously when I ask why there is suffering in the world?' or, 'Is my taste so perverted that I cannot distinguish between moral good and evil?' Duhm prefers the former interpretation, but the latter seems to be required by the parallelism. **Cannot my taste discern mischievous things?** As Job trusts his palate to give him the taste of food, so he implicitly trusts the testimony of his moral sense for the assurance that sin on his part is not the cause of his suffering, be the cause what it may.

[1] Froude, 307.

VII. 1–21.

THE BITTERNESS OF HUMAN LIFE.

1 Is there not a [1]warfare to man upon earth?
And are not his days like the days of an hireling?
2 As a servant that earnestly desireth the shadow,
And as an hireling that looketh for his wages:
3 So am I made to possess months of vanity,
And wearisome nights are appointed to me.
4 When I lie down, I say,
[2]When shall I arise? but the night is long;
And I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.
5 My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust;
My skin [3]closeth up and breaketh out afresh.
6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
And are spent without hope.
7 Oh remember that my life is wind:
Mine eye shall no more see good.
8 The eye of him that seeth me shall behold me no more:
Thine eyes shall be upon me, but I shall not be.
9 As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away,
So he that goeth down to [4]Sheol shall come up no more.
10 He shall return no more to his house,
Neither shall his place know him any more.
11 Therefore I will not refrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
12 Am I a sea, or a sea-monster,
That thou settest a watch over me?
13 When I say, My bed shall comfort me,
My couch shall ease my complaint;
14 Then thou scarest me with dreams,
And terrifiest me through visions:
15 So that my soul chooseth strangling,
And death rather than *these* my bones.
16 [5]I loathe *my life*; I [6]would not live alway:
Let me alone; for my days are [7]vanity.
17 What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him,
And that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him,
18 And that thou shouldest visit him every morning,
And try him every moment?

19 How long wilt thou not look away from me,
Nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?
20 If I have sinned, what [8]do I unto thee, O thou [9]watcher of men?
Why hast thou set me as a mark for thee,
So that I am a burden to myself?
21 And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity?
For now shall I lie down in the dust;
And thou shalt seek me diligently, but I shall not be.

[1] Or, *time of service*
[2] Or, *When shall I arise, and the night be gone?*
[3] Or, *is broken and become loathsome*
[4] Or, *the grave*
[5] Or, *I waste away*
[6] Or, *shall*
[7] Or, *as a breath*
[8] Or, *can I do*
[9] Or, *preserver*

'Everything that can be said by a sick man against life is in this chapter. The whole of the vast subsequent literature is summed up here, and he who has once read it may fairly ask never to be troubled by anything more on that side.'[1] Job now includes within his survey all the human race, and the thought of his fellow-sufferers not only brings him no comfort, but rather multiplies his misery. His bodily disease makes his imagination morbid, and his presupposition that all afflictions are inflictions due to divine wrath distorts his view of the universe, and gives everything the colour of his own sad thoughts. The human lot, which he once found so sweet and fair, is now the hard campaign of a soldier, the drudgery of a hireling who longs for the evening shadows. 'God's bright and intricate device of days and seasons' is but a dull procession of months of vanity and nights of weariness. Life is as brief as it is unsubstantial, flying like a shuttle, passing like the wind, dissolving into nothing like a cloud, and man descends to the underworld from which he never returns. As Job dwells on human weakness and misery, his despair goes down with rapid strides to still lower depths. Having at length passed all hope and fear alike, he resolves, ere he die, to speak in the anguish of his soul and tell the Author of his misery what he thinks of Him. His spirit has become envenomed, and his speech is unsurpassably bitter. With savage irony he asks if he is a sea or a sea-dragon,

[1] *Mark Rutherford*, 280.

rising in rebellion against God, threatening the order and peace of the world, that he must be subdued with plagues. Why should God magnify puny man, and visit him incessantly to spy upon his actions and find reasons for torturing him? Has He become the mere Watcher and Inquisitor of men? He was not always so. Once He seemed to be Job's Friend; yes, and memories of His kindness still rise irrepressible. His present anger can surely be no more than a mysterious mood, which will pass, and then He will wish to resume His old happy relations with His servant. Why, oh why, should He not lay aside His wrath and forgive him now? Soon it will be too late, and when His servant shall have gone beyond recall, regrets will be unavailing.

1 **Is there not a warfare** (or, **a time of service**) **to man upon the earth?** The word tr. **warfare** (צָבָא) means primarily active military service, and secondarily any kind of toil (cf. 14^{14}, Is 40^{2}, Dn 10^{1}). The poet, who did not win a fortune by his pen, but doubtless earned his bread, like others, with sweating brow, reveals his profound fellow-feeling for human misery, making his hero no solitary exception, but the representative of all those weary burdened multitudes who toil through life's day and creep silently to rest.

2 **As a servant that desireth the shadow, And as an hireling.** The Heb. **slave** (עֶבֶד) being a member of his master's family, and enjoying the protection of the clan, was often in a much better position than the defenceless hireling (שָׂכִיר), whose sole relation to his employer was the cash nexus. But for both of them life meant incessant toil. The slave **earnestly desires**—lit. pants for (יִשְׁאַף)—the shadow of the cool and restful evening, and the hireling **looks forward to** (יְקַוֶּה) the moment when he will receive his wages and obtain his release. Cf. the words in *Cymbeline*:

> 'Thou thy worldly task hast done,
> Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.'

3 **Months of vanity** and **wearisome nights** are phrases happily chosen to express respectively the duration and the intensity of Job's suffering, which was probably more severe in

the night than in the day (30^{17}). He moans that he is **made to possess**, through no fault of his own, his life of pain. Willy-nilly, he has to accept his heritage of woe; his own desires and tastes are never consulted; everything is **appointed** for him by the arbitrary will of the Taskmaster whose slave he is. In this chapter Job's thoughts of God are even more sombre than those of Omar Khayyám, to whom men are

> 'But helpless pieces of the game He plays
> Upon this chequer-board of Nights and Days.'

4 **When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise?** The pathetic record which this verse gives of a night of feverish unrest was written by one who knew. The text, with its three lines, is evidently in some confusion. Bickell and Beer strike out 'but the night is long' as a dittograph, and thus get a couplet. The LXX suggests an excellent quatrain, 'When I lie down, I say, "When will it be day [that I may arise]?" And when I arise, "When will it be evening?" And I am full of tossings to and fro till the dawning of the day.'

5 The sores breed **worms**, form hard crusts—**clods of earth**—and then break. **My skin closeth up and breaketh out afresh.** This is said to be a trait of elephantiasis.

6 **My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.** This is the usual translation, and it is accepted by Duhm, while Cheyne unnecessarily amends the text to 'swifter than a crane.' In one and the same speech Job vehemently cries for death (6^{8}), and yet bitterly complains of the brevity and fragility of life. In his heart of hearts it is not death for which he pants, but that life of happy communion with God which seems no longer possible. His revulsion from his present life, darkened by the frown of an angry God, is an evidence—though his friends fail to see it—not of his irreligiousness, but of his spiritual passion. Life (in the full Hebrew sense of the word) in God's favour lies, while life without His love is so empty that death is preferable.

7 **Oh remember that my life is wind.** When Job at length addresses himself directly to God, his words are not a remonstrance, but a pathetic appeal. Though his theology compels him to believe that God is angry with him, his heart ever and anon assures him that He, being pitiful and of tender mercy,

will listen to his cry. The passages which give expression to this faith are the most beautiful in the book, and the final triumph and satisfaction of the heart are evidently the goal which the poet has all along in view.

8 As this verse does not appear in the original LXX, it is cancelled, or at least suspected, by Dillmann and Beer, but Duhm retains it. **Thine eyes shall be upon me, but I shall not be.** This does not mean (as Luther and others suggest) 'Thy hostile eyes look upon me, and I perish' (*darüber vergehe Ich*), but 'Thine eyes, becoming gracious again, will look for me, but it will be too late.'

9, 10 **So he that goeth down to Sheol shall come up no more.** This assertion that there is no after-life is not the vehement sceptical rejection of an accepted belief, like our modern poet's 'Dead men rise up never,' but the reluctant assent to a traditional belief, so reluctant as to be suggestive of the dawning hope, the fond desire, that the belief may after all prove to be untrue. Here, as in some later passages, the writer makes his hero protest his faith in the vulgar view so strongly, that the reader's mind involuntarily recoils from the blank negations; and this effect is doubtless intended. For the present, if Job's own mind is unconsciously stirred by a larger hope, he rejects it as an idle dream. But the seed has been sown in darkness, and will grow. There is a striking parallel to these verses in the beginning of the Babylonian 'Descent of Ishtar into Hades,' where the underworld is called 'the house into which whoso entereth cometh not out again, the path which returneth not again.'[1]

11 **Therefore I will not refrain my mouth.** Feeling that, with nothing to hope, he has also nothing to fear, Job resolves to indulge in unrestrained complaining. All but crushed beneath the load of affliction, his spirit yet rises up in wrath against his Oppressor, and accuses Him to the face. Hitherto he has exercised a measure of self-control, and the violence of his accusations has been tempered at least by their indirectness. He has cursed his day, but with instinctive reverence has spared his God. Now the last barrier of reserve is swept away, and his language becomes a torrent. The doublets 11b and

[1] Jeremias, *The OT in the Light of the Ancient East*, ii. 256.

11^c can scarcely both be genuine. Following the original LXX, Bickell strikes out 11^c. Duhm uses part of both lines, and reads 'I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.'

12 **Am I a sea, or a sea-monster, That thou settest a watch over me?** The pron. 'Thou' is used all through the rest of the chapter, for the attack now becomes frontal. Before Job's mind there floats the old myth, borrowed by the Hebrews from the Babylonians, of the victory of Marduk, the God of light, over Tiâmat the sea-monster. The Hebrews ascribed this conquest to Jahweh, a greater Marduk, who continued to rule the raging of the sea (Ps 89^9). With bitter irony Job asks if he, a frail and puny mortal, must be jealously guarded by God as another rival who menaces the peace of the universe. To his blurred vision the Being whom he formerly loved and worshipped has been transformed into an unreasoning and pitiless Omnipotence.

13, 14 **thou scarest me . . . terrifiest me.**[1] The delirious **dreams** and **visions** which accompany Job's disease, and which medical science would now ascribe to natural causes, are traced by him directly to God, and regarded as proofs of His hostility.

15 **So that my soul chooseth strangling.** Again overcome with a sense of self-loathing, Job cries that, had he his choice, he would die outright rather than linger on in pain, preferring **strangling** to such a life. With thoughts of suffocation he was doubtless familiar, for choking often threatens the leper, and sometimes proves fatal. The verse does not, however, support Dillon's opinion that 'suicide, the ever open door of the Stoics, invited him temptingly in, but he withstood the temptation.'[2] There is no suggestion of self-slaughter. Instead of 'my bones' (which would imply that Job was already reduced almost to a skeleton), some scholars, making a slight textual change (מֵעַצְמוֹתַי into מֵעַצְבוֹתַי), read 'my pains.' Merx and others connect **I loathe** (16^a), which in its present position has no object, with 15^b, reading, '**I despise death in comparison with my pains.**'

16 **Let me alone.** This is the passionate cry of a sufferer to his tormentor. His meaning is not 'Hands off, and let me die!' but 'Hands off, and give me a brief respite ere I die!' Is it not enough that his days are **vanity** (הֶבֶל), emptiness, unreality?

[1] See Blake's extraordinary Illustration XI.

[2] *Sceptics of the OT*, 74 f.

Has it been ordained that to breathe is to suffer? (*Leben ist Leiden* is the motto of German pessimists.) Job's desire for at least a painless death was probably connected with the old belief that a tragic end was God's judgment upon a sinful life. 'One knows not how many died the most unhappy death imaginable, until the author of the Book of Job found a comfort for men—a comfort, indeed, which only a few choice spirits were capable of appreciating.'[3]

17 **What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?** Job's sense of fellowship with all other innocent sufferers makes his heart still hotter within him, and he now gives utterance to the bitterest parody to be found in the Bible. The writer of the eighth Psalm wonders that God, the Creator of the starry heavens, should be so mindful of man as to visit him, honour him, and almost raise him to the rank of the Elohim. Goethe tells how the Psalmist's words rose naturally to his lips when he stood on the top of the Brocken. But Job makes another use of them. He marvels that God should so magnify man as to think it necessary to keep a jealous watch over all his actions, visit him with pitiless strictness every morning, and ruthlessly try him every moment. To Job it has become a terrifying, almost a maddening, thought that God 'slumbers not nor sleeps,' for His watchfulness is the espionage of a malignant persecutor. If Ps 8 is later than the Book of Job, as Duhm and other scholars think, there is, of course, no parody. In that case the Psalmist might be the borrower. But if the words were first used in Job's sense, would it be possible ever to take the acid out of them?

19 **look away . . . let me alone.** Job has the feeling of a child pursued into every corner of a room by the staring eyes of a hateful picture. **Till I swallow down my spittle** is an Eastern proverb, often heard among the Arabs of to-day, meaning 'for a single moment.'

20 **If I have sinned, what do I unto thee?** Should the great God let His calm be disturbed by the transgressions of men—puny rebels who surely could not endanger His dominion? Job gives expression to one of the ideas of the sages, whose tendency was to eliminate feeling from the attributes of God, as if He were too far above men to be affected either by their

[1] Smend, 494.

goodness or their badness (cf. $22^{2.3}$). The teaching of the prophets was precisely the opposite—that, as an ethical Being, God (like every good man) loves righteousness and hates iniquity, delights in the one and is grieved by the other. **O thou watcher of men.** Job's mind is obsessed by the thought that God is for ever on the watch for men's unguarded words and acts. 'Spy' or 'Inquisitor' conveys the idea. **Why hast thou set me as a mark for thee?** Job thinks of himself, not as a target for God's arrows (though see 6^4 $16^{12.13}$), but as an obstacle (מִפְגָּע) in His way, a stumbling-block which He is continually striking against. **So that I am a burden to myself.** The LXX reads **a burden unto thee** (ἐπὶ σοὶ φορτίον), and 'unto myself' is one of the eighteen corrections of the scribes (*tiḳḳune sopherim*). Here the motive of the change is obvious. The idea that the victim of the almighty Spy becomes in the end a burden to Him is not too bold for the poet, and admirably suits the context.

21 **And thou shalt seek me diligently.** Job's speech contains another surprise at the close. Between him and the God of wrath, who hates him, as his afflictions prove, there rises a vision of the God of grace, who surely still loves him, as blessed memories and a good conscience assure him; and at once the sufferer's loud and bitter cries soften to notes of pleading remonstrance. Since God must, as he assumes, sooner or later forgive the sins which have offended Him (whatever they may be), and come back to renew the old fellowship, he pathetically asks why not now, ere it be too late? If Job is to lie down in the dust and be seen no more, must not God return to him without delay, in order to avoid vain regrets if He should afterwards seek him diligently and fail to find him? The conflict in Job's mind between two conceptions of God—the God whom he comes perilously near to renouncing altogether, and the God for whose presence he passionately longs—creates an antinomy which the poet has to transcend. 'His religious feeling helps him to grope his way back to a God who is no Inquisitor, but the true Friend of His friends.'[1]

[1] Duhm, 46.

VIII. 1–22.

THE TESTIMONY OF BYGONE GENERATIONS.

1 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
2 How long wilt thou speak these things?
And *how long* shall the words of thy mouth be *like* a mighty wind?
3 Doth God pervert judgement?
Or doth the Almighty pervert justice?
4 [1]If thy children have sinned against him,
And he have delivered them into the hand of their transgression:
5 If thou wouldest seek diligently unto God,
And make thy supplication to the Almighty;
6 If thou wert pure and upright;
Surely now he would awake for thee,
And make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.
7 And though thy beginning was small,
Yet thy latter end should greatly increase.
8 For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age,
And apply thyself to that which their fathers have searched out:
9 (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing,
Because our days upon earth are a shadow:)
10 Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee,
And utter words out of their heart?
11 Can the [2]rush grow up without mire?
Can the [3]flag grow without water?
12 Whilst it is yet in its greenness, *and* not cut down,
It withereth before any *other* herb.
13 So are the paths of all that forget God;
And the hope of the godless man shall perish:
14 Whose confidence shall [4]break in sunder,
And whose trust is a spider's [5]web.
15 He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand:
He shall hold fast thereby, but it shall not endure.
16 He is green before the sun,
And his shoots go forth over his garden.
17 His roots are wrapped [6]about the heap,
He beholdeth the place of stones.
18 If he be destroyed from his place,
Then it shall deny him, *saying*, I have not seen thee.

19 Behold, this is the joy of his way.
And out of the [7]earth shall others spring.
20 Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man,
Neither will he uphold the evil-doers.
21 [8]He will yet fill thy mouth with laughter,
And thy lips with shouting.
22 They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame;
And the tent of the wicked shall be no more.

[1] Or, *If thy children sinned . . . he delivered &c.*
[2] Or, *papyrus*
[3] Or, *reed-grass*
[4] Or, *be cut off*
[5] Heb. *house.*
[6] Or, *beside the spring*
[7] Or, *dust*
[8] Or, *Till he fill*

If Bildad is neither a seer nor an original thinker,—if he has no impressive revelations of his own to record, and but a poor opinion of the enlightenment of his age,—he may at least claim to be an erudite man who cherishes a profound respect for the wisdom of the ancients. For him the sum of knowledge is to be found in tradition, and his mental furniture consists in proverbs and quotations. Job's passionate discourses have swept over him like a mighty wind, leaving on his mind the one painful impression that God's righteousness has been impugned; and it is to this enormity that he addresses himself. To him the bare idea of divine injustice is inconceivable, while justice can mean nothing else than proportionate retribution—the success and happiness of the good, the failure and misery of the bad. His principles compel him to assert that the sudden death of Job's children was the punishment due to their sin; but if Job, whose life has been spared, will make supplication to God, and prove that he is pure and upright, he will be rewarded with even more than his former happiness. There are doubtless anomalies in the government of the world, due to oversight on God's part; but when He arouses Himself to action, He makes all crooked things straight. If Job would give heed to the testimony of the wise ancients, he would learn how brief is the prosperity of the ungodly, how sure and swift their doom. Like a fragile reed, or the delicate web of the spider, is the good fortune of the wicked. But God will never cast off the perfect man,—the man who, whatever his faults, is humbly submissive to God,—and Bildad predicts that Job will yet have a glorious issue from his troubles, and enjoy again all the rewards of his piety.

2 *how long* **shall the words of thy mouth be** *like* **a mighty wind?** The phrase **a mighty wind** (רוּחַ כַּבִּיר), though used in scorn, conveys some idea of Job's eloquence, and a sympathetic listener might have employed it to describe the rush and sweep of true oratory; but Job's passionate pleas and protestations remind this critic of nothing but the violence and emptiness of wind.

3 **Doth God pervert judgement?** In the questions with which Bildad's speech opens, the divine names are strongly emphasised. **God pervert! Shaddai pervert!** The bare thought is blasphemous. The Judge of all the earth *must* do right; God and injustice are incompatible terms; divine power and equity are attributes for ever indissoluble. These are the first principles of the theology which Bildad received from the ancient sages, who were doubtless right in maintaining that a moral law rules the world. But they were wrong in affirming, as Job, taught by experience, was right in denying, that suffering comes to men only through the operation of that law. Bildad's truisms were hopelessly inadequate to explain all the painful mysteries of human life.

4 It is better to make the second line the apodosis of the first: **If thy children sinned against him, he delivered them into the hand of their transgression.** The **hand** is the power. The idea is that evil has the power of striking back and taking vengeance on the evil-doers—that sin is destructive of the sinner. Bildad's ruthless logic, cold and keen as tempered steel, is a veritable dagger-thrust in a bereaved father's heart. It never occurs to him to institute an inquiry into the life of Job's ten sons and daughters. That is unnecessary, for their character can be inferred without more ado from their fate. God being just, they, His victims, were all sinners. After they have died a violent death, their reputation is slain with a syllogism.

5, 6 It is better to use present tenses in the protasis and futures in the apodosis: **If thou seekest and makest . . . and art pure . . . surely he will.** Bildad assumes that if Job had been as guilty as his children, he would have perished with them. The fact that he has been spared the worst judgment—a sudden and fearful death—proves him to be one of those sufferers who, if duly submissive, will be restored to all their

former happiness, and even have it increased. In ^{6b} the LXX reads **he would answer thy prayer** instead of **he would wake for thee**, and this gives a good connection with **make thy supplication** in ^{5b}. The idea of God arousing Himself from His inactivity is common enough in the OT (Ps 35^{23}, Is $63^{15f.}$), but it is perhaps too bold for Bildad's scrupulous piety. In order to reduce a triplet to a doublet, Beer strikes out ^{6a}, and Duhm ^{6b}, as a gloss.

7 **thy beginning . . . thy latter end.** These refer to Job's past and future time of prosperity, worldly success being for his friends the sole measure of divine blessing.

8 **that which their fathers have searched out.** Bildad is a reverent and enthusiastic *laudator temporis acti*. His watchword is, Back to the Ancients. It is impossible to avoid the feeling that the poet now and then smiles at his solemn traditionalist, whose portrait is not a fancy sketch, but drawn to the life. Bildad would have Job's imagination to make a leap across the gulf of time to **the former age**—a sufficiently vague expression—not because the men of that dim and distant past were more clever and original than those of the present, but because they were privileged to receive from **their fathers** that precious heritage of truth which one may now appropriate and proudly call one's own.

9 **For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing.** The wisdom of the past is many centuries old, and has a stability to which the new-fangled doctrines of to-day can lay no claim. But just *how* the research of 'the fathers' was rewarded with results which have never attended, and perhaps can never attend, any subsequent quest after truth, is not made quite clear. Bildad adduces only two reasons for the comparative unenlightenment of his contemporaries: first, they have the misfortune to be born so late—they are **but of yesterday**; and, second, they are doomed to die so soon—their **days on earth are but a shadow.** In fact, they are short-lived, ignorant moderns, not wise and happy antediluvians.

10 **And utter words out of their heart**: sayings which embody the results of their reflection as well as their experience—**heart** being the seat of both intellect and feeling. In vv.$^{11-19}$ Bildad gives some really brilliant specimens of the wisdom of

the sages, whom he regards as predestined to **teach** every man who has ears to hear.

11 **Can the rush grow up without mire? The papyrus** (גֹּמֶא) grew in the valley of the Nile, usually to a height of six feet, and Pliny (*N.H.* xiii. 11–13) compares its tufted head to a thyrsus. Of its stem were made boats, sails, cloth, and writing materials, while its pith was a common article of food.

12, 13 **Whilst it is yet in its greenness.** The river gives the Nile-grass life, and if the water recedes from its roots, it withers more quickly than any other herb. Alike in its luxuriant growth and its swift decay, it images the prosperity of the wicked. In [13a] read, **Such is the end of all them that forget God,** which gives a much better sense than 'Such are the paths.' The LXX has *τὰ ἔσχατα*, and the Heb. word for 'latter end' (אַחֲרִית) is very like that for 'paths' (אָרְחוֹת).

14 **Whose confidence shall break in sunder.** This is not a probable reading, and the parallelism with [14b] requires, instead of the verb, a noun corresponding with **spider's web.** Many scholars therefore read, 'Whose confidence shall be spiders' threads' (as in Is 59[5. 6]). Saadia's Arabic translation has 'gossamer,' which is apparently no more than a happy conjecture.

16–19 The figure of an unnamed plant which sends suckers over a garden, and is firmly rooted beside running water, but soon destroyed in some undefined way, is not so well wrought out as that of the papyrus. Duhm would cancel vv.[14-19], and make v.[13] and v.[20] form a quatrain.

17 **His roots are wrapped beside the spring, He beholdeth the place of stones** (marg.). The second line conveys scarcely any meaning, and many conjectural readings have been suggested. The word for 'beholdeth' (יְחֻזֶּה) is very like that for 'liveth' (יִחְיֶה), which the LXX (rendering *ζήσεται*) evidently had before it. Siegfried accordingly reads, 'It keeps alive between stones,' and Duhm, 'It lives in a house of stones,' which he takes to be the garden house erected over the spring, the most favourable spot for the growth of a succulent plant.

18 **If he be destroyed from his place.** Destruction comes to this plant not, as in the case of the papyrus, from lack of water,

for it grows beside a spring, but rather from some external violence.

19 **Behold, this is the joy of his way.** 'Joy' is strange in such a connection. If the text is correct, the words can only be ironical, and irony is scarcely one of Bildad's weapons. The LXX reads, 'This is the end of the godless.'

20–22 Having cited such apothegms of the ancients as seem pertinent to the case in hand, Bildad sums up the teaching of his masters in a sententious commonplace of his own (v.[20]), and promises Job, who, in spite of his tell-tale afflictions and dangerous opinions, is still, both in God's judgment of grace and man's of charity, **a perfect man**, a future of jubilant happiness (v.[21]). A pointed reference, in conclusion, to the overthrow of Job's enemies, may be meant to suggest to him that the disputants who, under moral constraint, are so strongly combating his heretical opinions, are, after all, what they have ever professed to be, his true friends.

IX. 1–35.

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE INNOCENT.

1 Then Job answered and said,
2 Of a truth I know that it is so:
[1]But how can man be just [2]with God?
3 [3]If he be pleased to contend with him,
He cannot answer him one of a thousand.
4 *He is* wise in heart, and mighty in strength:
Who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered?
5 Which removeth the mountains, and they know it not,
When he overturneth them in his anger.
6 Which shaketh the earth out of her place,
And the pillars thereof tremble.
7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not;
And sealeth up the stars.
8 Which alone stretcheth out the heavens,
And treadeth upon the [4]waves of the sea.
9 Which maketh the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,
And the chambers of the south.
10 Which doeth great things past finding out;
Yea, marvellous things without number.

11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not:
He passeth on also, but I perceive him not.
12 Behold, he seizeth *the prey*, who can [5]hinder him?
Who will say unto him, What doest thou?
13 God will not withdraw his anger;
The helpers of [6]Rahab [7]do stoop under him.
14 How much less shall I answer him,
And choose out my words *to reason* with him?
15 Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer;
I would make supplication to [8]mine adversary.
16 If I had called, and he had answered me;
Yet would I not believe that he hearkened unto my voice.
17 [9]For he breaketh me with a tempest,
And multiplieth my wounds without cause.
18 He will not suffer me to take my breath,
But filleth me with bitterness.
19 [10]If *we speak* of the strength of the mighty, [11]lo, *he is there*!
And if of judgement, who will appoint me a time?
20 Though I be righteous, mine own mouth shall condemn me:
Though I be perfect, [12]it shall prove me perverse.
21 [13]I am [14]perfect; I regard not myself;
I despise my life.
22 It is all one; therefore I say,
He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.
23 If the scourge slay suddenly,
He will mock at the [15]trial of the innocent.
24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked:
He covereth the faces of the judges thereof;
If *it be* not *he*, who then is it?
25 Now my days are swifter than a [16]post:
They flee away, they see no good.
26 They are passed away as the [17]swift ships:
As the eagle that swoopeth on the prey.
27 If I say, I will forget my complaint,
I will put off my *sad* countenance, and [18]be of good cheer:
28 I am afraid of all my sorrows,
I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.
29 I shall be condemned;
Why then do I labour in vain?
30 If I wash myself [19]with snow water,
And [20]make my hands never so clean;
31 Yet wilt thou plunge me in the ditch,
And mine own clothes shall abhor me.

32 For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him
That we should come together in judgement.
33 There is no [21]daysman betwixt us,
That might lay his hand upon us both.
34 Let him take his rod away from me,
And let not his terror make me afraid:
35 Then would I speak, and not fear him;
For I am not so in myself.

[1] Or, *For*
[2] Or, *before*
[3] Or, *If one should desire . . . he could not &c.*
[4] Heb. *high places.*
[5] Or, *turn him back*
[6] Or, *arrogancy* See Is 30[7].
[7] Or, *did*
[8] Or, *him that would judge me*
[9] Heb. *He who.*
[10] Or, *If* we speak *of strength, lo,* he is *mighty*
[11] Or, *Lo,* here am I, saith he; *and if of judgement, Who &c.*
[12] Or, *he*
[13] Or, *Though I be perfect, I will not regard &c.*
[14] See ch. 1[1].
[15] Or, *calamity*
[16] Or, *runner*
[17] Heb. *ships of reed.*
[18] Heb. *brighten up.*
[19] Another reading is, *with snow.*
[20] Heb. *cleanse my hands with lye.*
[21] Or, *umpire*

Half ironically, half in despair, Job admits the principle for which his opponents contend, that man cannot be just before God, and then demonstrates its worthlessness. A frail mortal man cannot justify himself before God, not because he is not innocent, but because it is impossible for him to vindicate his innocence before omnipotence. His simplicity and weakness would be confounded by the subtlety and power of a God who can change right into wrong. The dread Being who gives so stupendous displays of His might in nature—uprooting the mountains, shaking the solid earth, obscuring the sun, sealing up the stars, treading on the waves—is inscrutable, irresistible, irresponsible in His actions. If He subdued the gigantic powers which opposed Him in the primeval world, how can Job ever maintain his cause before Him? However conscious of his innocence, he would not stand erect to defend his rights, but fall on his face as a suppliant. If God were cited, and responded to the summons, He would not come to give an impartial hearing, but to do what He is doing even now—to put a helpless victim to the torture in order to wring from him a confession of guilt. The thought that he will have to belie himself before his omni-

potent Judge seems to fascinate Job, and for a time he morbidly dwells upon it; but at last, with a sudden revulsion of horror, he shakes off his craven fear, and boldly asserts his integrity, defiant of consequences. His audacity now reaches a climax, and, in a brief indictment of tremendous energy, he accuses God of destroying the righteous, mocking the innocent, and giving the earth over to injustice. Then, in softer tones, he tells how his own life is speeding to an end, and giving him no happiness. Sometimes he resolves to be of good cheer in spite of his sufferings; but the consciousness that his innocence is denied, that God will hold him guilty, breaks his spirit. Whatever he does to prove himself blameless, he finds himself only plunged in deeper guilt. There is no judgment-bar at which God will meet with him on equal terms, as man with man. If only there were an umpire whose authority would be recognised by both sides, how gladly would he submit his case to arbitration! If God would but cease to afflict and to terrorise him, then he would speak for himself with the boldness of conscious innocence.

2 **how can man be just with God?** This bitterly ironical question is the keynote of a discourse which from first to last is 'like sweet bells jangled, harsh and out of tune.' The discord between God and the human soul nears the highest pitch. While Job's friends regard it as blasphemy to question the equity of divine government, his own experience has taught him to make a sharp distinction between God's omnipotence, which he realises so fully, and His righteousness, which he is compelled to question. If his afflictions testify that he is counted guilty in spite of his innocence, then **of a truth** (אֱמֶנֶם, a form of 'amen') man cannot be just before God. Justice is the Almighty's arbitrary will; His mere fiat makes right and wrong; moral distinctions are not rooted in His nature, but based upon His absolute decrees. God is to be classed with those Eastern potentates whose highest law is their own caprice; under whose rule the innocent man who falls out of favour is condemned unheard, has no court of appeal, must bear the stigma of guilt to the end of his days, and leave behind him a dishonoured name. At this stage Job's conception of God in no way differs from that of Islam, of which Palgrave writes: 'It is clear that, in such a theology, no place is left for absolute good or evil, reason

or extravagance; all is abridged in the autocratical will of the one great Agent: 'sic volo, sic jubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas; or, more significantly still, in Arabic: "*Kama yesha*," "as He wills it," to quote the constantly recurring expression of the Koran.'[1]

3 This sentence may be read in three ways: (1) 'If one should desire to contend with Him, he could not answer Him one of a thousand' (marg.); (2) 'If He be pleased to contend with him, he cannot answer Him' (RV); (3) 'If He be pleased to contend with him, He will not answer him.' It is probable that God is conceived as asking, and man as attempting to answer, the thousand questions; but there is nothing to indicate whether God or man takes the initiative in the contention. Here for the first time Job expresses his desire to plead his cause before God, and 'he constantly repeats anew this desire, sometimes with defiance, sometimes with touching entreaty, sometimes with sobs, sometimes with noble pride.'[2]

4 ***He is*** **wise in heart.** In Heb. psychology, **heart** (לֵבָב) includes the whole inner being, intellect, feeling and will, the context indicating which predominates. Here the meaning is 'mind' (LXX διανοίᾳ). **Who hath hardened himself** (הִקְשָׁה) **against him, and prospered?** When Pharaoh hardened his heart against God (Ex $8^{15.\ 32.\ 34}$), it was natural that his career should end in disaster; but Job's suggestion is that if even the best of men were to contend with the Almighty, he might fare no better. The sufferer derives no comfort from the thought of God's wisdom and might, for he has ceased to believe that these attributes are directed by love. God's wisdom is a baffling, dumbfounding subtlety, His power a staggering, crushing strength.

5–10 It is the thought of God's resistless imperial power that brings home to Job the futility of any attempt to vindicate his innocence before Him. As he recalls the sublime manifestations of divine energy in heaven and earth, his mind, oppressed by the feeling of God's hostility, inevitably fastens on those dark and appalling aspects of nature which make God Himself appear terrible. This passage is one of many which reveal the dramatist as among the greatest of nature-poets. With masterly skill in selection, and the utmost economy of words in description, he

[1] S. M. Zwemer, *Islam*, 263. [2] Duhm, *New World*, 1894, p. 339.

flashes before the eye a series of perfect pictures, which make the old commonplace world once more appear miraculous.

5 **Who removeth the mountains, and they know it not.** This does not give a good sense, for it would be strange if the mountains did know when they are uprooted. The Syriac has a remarkable reading which is accepted by some scholars: 'Who removeth the mountains, and He knoweth it not.' The stupendous output of energy is for Him so small a matter that He is unconscious of it. In the Book of Job the more daring reading is always likely to be the right one. The later toning-down is easily understood.

6 **Who shaketh the earth out of her place.** To the ancients the earth was a huge structure resting on pillars—the roots of the great mountains—and an earthquake was not a local disturbance, but the trembling of the pillars and the shaking of the whole earth.

7 **Who commandeth the sun, and it riseth not:** *i.e.* appeareth not. Tempests and eclipses, which made the sun invisible, were not traced to natural laws, but attributed to the express command of God. **The stars,** popularly and poetically regarded as animated, were confined to their heavenly abode, the door of which was shut and sealed, until at God's call they came forth (Is 40^{26}).

8 **And treadeth upon the waves of the sea**: lit. 'the high places of the sea.' The reference may be either to the earthly or to the heavenly ocean, the second being the storm-clouds. In Ps 29^{3} the thunder is the voice of God upon the waters of the sky; here it may be regarded as the resounding tread of His feet.

9 **the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades.** With this verse cf. Am 5^{8}. Duhm thinks that the word for the Bear (עָשׁ)—which occurs in 38^{38}—should here perhaps be deleted as a dittograph of the first letters of the word rendered 'which maketh' (עֹשֶׂה). The absence of the conjunction 'and' before Orion would thus be explained. The word for **Orion** (כְּסִיל) means 'fool,' and the bands of Orion (38^{31}) were probably the fetters with which, according to an old myth, a rebellious giant was chained to the sky. **The Pleiades** is probably right, though Hoffmann suggests Sirius. **The chambers of the south** cannot be identified with certainty. Duhm thinks of another (unknown) constellation, and Budde of 'the treasure-chambers of the richly

bestarred southern skies' (cf. 37^9, Pr 24^4), while Hoffmann would make a slight change in the Heb. word for 'south' (תֵּימָן) and read 'the twins' (תְּאוֹמִן), leaving 'the chamber' as the name of a distinct constellation.

10 This verse is almost identical with 5^9, 'past finding out' and 'unsearchable' representing the same Heb. words. If Job is consciously quoting Eliphaz, he does it half-ironically. He is, of course, as conscious of God's marvellous power as his friends, but he complains that it is controlled by no principle.

11, 12 **Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not.** No one can contend with a God so impalpable and elusive, whose power has all the terrors of invisibility; who sweeps past, leaving no traces but calamities and miseries; who seizes his victim with a violence at once irresistible and irresponsible. **Who can hinder him?** Better (with marg.), 'Who can turn him back?'

13, 14 **The helpers of Rahab did stoop under him** (marg.). When the God of Job's imagination once gives the reins to His capricious anger, He is inexorable, as Rahab and her helpers long ago experienced to their cost. This is another allusion to the myth of God's primeval conflict with the storm-dragon. **Rahab** (רַהַב, 'boisterousness,' 'arrogance') was a Heb. name for the Babylonian Tiâmat (Tĕhōm or Chaos in Gn 1^2), who was subdued by Marduk, and her **helpers** were the brood of inferior monsters who joined in her rebellion and shared her fate. Job argues that if these giants were defeated, he, a frail, stricken mortal, has but a poor chance of ever standing before God in His wrath.

15 **Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer.** Though Job is confident that he is in the right, he cannot help feeling that his moral strength would be shaken by an omnipotence which he regards as the deification of despotism. Subdued, not quickened, by the glance of God, he would forget all his arguments, and cry for mercy. There is a famous passage in Horace (*Odes*, iii. 3. 3): 'The man that is pure and fixed in his design is not shaken from his firm resolve by the glance of the imperious tyrant.' But suppose that the 'vultus instantis tyranni' were the face of God!

16 If Job **called** God—cited, or judicially summoned Him—

and He responded, yet Job would not believe that He would equitably enter into debate and give him a patient hearing. It would be unlike Him to act so reasonably. Afflictions have driven the sufferer into unbelief regarding the goodness of God. **Would hearken** is better than 'hearkened.' The LXX reads, 'If I cited, he would not answer me; I cannot believe,' etc. For a similar legal use of the word 'call,' or 'sue'—*in jus vocare*—see Is 59^4.

17 **For he breaketh me with a tempest.** Job's conviction, that God would not listen to his pleading, is an inference from His habitual treatment of him. The word for **breaketh** (Impf. of שׁוּף) is found in only two other passages—Gn 3^5, where the reference is to the *bruising* of the serpent's head, and Ps 139^{11}, where the RV reads, 'The darkness shall *overwhelm* me.' At this stage Job's thoughts of God differ little from those of Caliban:

> 'Saith He is terrible: watch His feats in proof!
> One hurricane will spoil six good months' hope.
> He hath a spite against me, that I know.'

19 **If** *we speak* **of the strength of the mighty, lo,** *here am I, saith he*; **And if of judgement, etc.** Whether it be to a trial of strength or to a dispute about right, He is ready to accept every challenge; and who can hope to maintain a cause against Him? There is nothing that He cannot do; being morally as well as physically almighty, He can stamp an innocent man as an abandoned sinner. 'He is strong and Lord,' as Caliban says, and that settles the matter.

20 **mine own mouth shall condemn me.** Job is haunted by the fear that, dazed and amazed in the presence of his Judge, he will stammer out 'Guilty' when he ought to plead 'Not Guilty.' **Though I be perfect, it** (my mouth) **shall prove me perverse.** This rendering is suggested by the context and the parallelism, though it is also possible to read 'He (God) shall prove me perverse.'

21 **I am perfect.** Job's nobler and truer nature suddenly rises victorious. Shuddering at the thought of letting himself, a cringing coward, be intimidated into a false confession, he crushes down his fear, stands morally erect, and exclaims, **Blameless I am!** And as if conscious that God hears his bold, indignant words, he quickly adds, **I regard not myself; I despise**

my life. It is all one. Probably the last sentence means, 'It is all one whether I live or die.' He has reached his 'centre of indifference,' life and death being equally full of darkness and despair. Contrast St. Paul's 'centre of indifference,' his strait betwixt two, life and death being both equally full of light and hope (Ph 1^{23}). Duhm adds the first words of 22^{a} to the end of 21^{b} (which is too short), and strikes out the prosaic 'therefore I say.' As v.^{22} would thus be left with one line, and 24 has a superfluous line, he joins these and reads, 'He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked: If it be not He, who then is it?' The first **He** is emphatic. It is remarkable that in this and the following verses, to the end of the chapter, Job does not name God. The Being from whom he feels so alienated, whose ways are now so mysterious, is the dreaded **He**.

23 **He will mock**: better, **He mocketh.** When **the scourge** (שׁוֹט)—any general calamity, such as war, famine or pestilence—slays good men and bad indiscriminately, God looks on with calm indifference, deriding **the trial** (מַסָּה) **of the innocent**, which may mean (1) their temptation to distrust and despair, or (2) their calamity (marg.). Dillmann and Budde would read 'despondency,' 'despair' (from root מָסַס, to melt).

24 The moral disorder of the world is to Job as great a mystery as his own suffering. Making a sweeping generalisation, he asserts that **the earth is given into the hand of the wicked.** The poet had in mind such overlords as the Persian viceroys. **He covereth the faces of the judges thereof**: an intentionally vague expression for the men in power. Those who ought to be the watchful administrators of justice are the blind agents of tyranny. For all the misgovernment of the world Job holds that God is responsible; he can logically do nothing else. All his bewilderment finds expression in the question, **If** *it be* **not** *he,* **who then is it?** The very strictness of Job's monotheism is what makes the problem of evil so baffling and tormenting to him. He has no Gnostic demiurge, no Christian devil, no scientific second causes, no scheme of providence to help him to solve the riddle of the universe.

25, 26 After this shuddering glance at the world's moral disorder, Job returns to his own inexplicable case, and his

imagination strikes off other images of the rapid passage of life—the fleet courier, the skiffs of reed gliding over the waters of the Nile, the eagle swooping on its prey—which form a climax. The poet displays a wonderful insight into the psychology of moods, making Job's fear of God and his longing for Him, his contempt of life and his yearning for it, alternate throughout the whole book with a perfect fitness which, as Duhm remarks, is in itself a sufficient proof that the writer was a born dramatist.

27, 28 **I will forget my complaint.** Sometimes, chiding his melancholy, Job makes a brave effort to **brighten up** (marg.), to be of good cheer as if he were well. If he has little success, it is not his suffering alone that takes the pith out of his resolution, but the conviction—expressed by the strong word **I know** (יָדַעְתִּי)—that God is determined to hold him guilty. With this knowledge, which is the culmination of doubt, contrast the knowledge which is the climax of faith—'But I know that my Vindicator liveth' (19^{25}). In ^{28a} read, **I dread all my pains.** Every pain is counted a penalty.

29 **I shall be condemned**: better, **I have to be condemned.** He feels that all his protestations of innocence, all his attempts to prove there has been a miscarriage of justice, are futile. He may as well be silent, for his case is prejudged, and has no appeal against the sentence of an arbitrary Omnipotence.

30, 31 As Job thinks of his vain endeavours to establish his innocence, he seems to himself a half-ludicrous, wholly tragic figure, as if he were washing himself with snow, and cleansing his hands with alkali, only to be plunged in the ditch, so that his very **clothes abhor him.** Some would read 'wash myself (white) as snow' (cf. Ps 51^{7}, Is 1^{18}), but the parallelism requires 'with snow' (marg.). The difference between **with snow** and **with snow water** is extremely small (בְּמוֹ = with, and בְּמֵי = with water), but the former is doubtless the true text, and the latter merely an unhappy Massoretic correction; for, while snow water is dirty, snow is an emblem of purity. Lagarde and Duhm suggest 'my friends' for 'my clothes' (שַׂלְמוֹתַי for שַׂלְמִי); but in his woeful plight Job sees himself not as his unjust friends see him, for their judgment is after all a comparatively small matter, but as an almighty, all-wise, and unjust God sees him;

and for his mingled feeling of self-pity and self-disgust he hits upon an incomparably fitting expression.

32 Job cannot be justified, because God is so uniquely great and remote. **He** (the distant pronoun is still used) **is not a man, as I am.** It is implied that if God were humanised—for an OT monotheist a stupendous thought—then Creator and creature would **come together in judgement**, and the innocent would obtain justice.

33 **There is no daysman.** The LXX reading is finer—'Would that there were a daysman (umpire or arbiter) between us!' It is not the statement of an inexorable fact, but the utterance of a passionate desire. An **umpire** (מוֹכִיחַ) would understand both sides, his authority would be recognised by both, and he would put an end to the intolerable estrangement. The man who uses such language is ostensibly pleading for justice; but deeper down he is seeking reconciliation, he is thirsting for love. Job is no conscious prophet, but his instinctive cry for a God in human form, and for a daysman between God and man, is an unconscious prophecy of incarnation and atonement. His faith is creative, his heart's intuitions are precursors of revelation.

34 **Let him take his rod away from me.** Job feels like a suspected but innocent child, who is so terrified by the rod which he sees in his angry father's hand that he cannot speak a word in self-defence. In 21^{9} Job again speaks of 'the rod of God.' **Let not his terror make me afraid.** It was the teaching of Isaiah (*e.g.* $2^{17.\ 19}$) that all men must bow 'before the terror of the Lord,' since 'He alone shall be exalted.' That teaching has sunk deep into the heart of the nation, and is reproduced by Job's three friends. But the author of the Book of Job is feeling after a still higher conception of God, no longer in His relation to the nation but to the individual, which shall do fuller justice to His love without detracting from His omnipotence and His majesty.

35 **I am not so in myself.** It is difficult to construe this **so**, but the general sense is clear. 'I am not so that I ought to fear Him; whatever external circumstances there may be to alarm me, I am not conscious of anything **in myself** that should make me dread His presence; my conscience is clear.'

X. 1–22.

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY.

1 My soul is weary of my life;
I will give free course to my complaint;
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
2 I will say unto God, Do not condemn me;
Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.
3 Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress,
That thou shouldest despise the [1]work of thine hands,
And shine upon the counsel of the wicked?
4 Hast thou eyes of flesh,
Or seest thou as man seeth?
5 Are thy days as the days of man,
Or thy years as man's days,
6 That thou inquirest after mine iniquity,
And searchest after my sin,
7 Although thou knowest that I am not wicked;
And there is none that can deliver out of thine hand?
8 Thine hands have framed me and fashioned me
Together round about; yet thou dost destroy me.
9 Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast fashioned me as clay;
And wilt thou bring me into dust again?
10 Hast thou not poured me out as milk,
And curdled me like cheese?
11 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,
And knit me together with bones and sinews.
12 Thou hast granted me life and favour,
And thy [2]visitation hath preserved my spirit.
13 Yet these things thou didst hide in thine heart;
I know that this *is* with thee:
14 If I sin, then thou markest me,
And thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.
15 If I be wicked, woe unto me;
And if I be righteous, yet shall I not lift up my head;
[3]Being filled with ignominy
And looking upon mine affliction.
16 And if *my head* exalt itself, thou huntest me as a lion:
And again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me.
17 Thou renewest thy witnesses against me,
And increasest thine indignation upon me;
[4]Changes and warfare are with me.
18 Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb?
I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me.

19 I should have been as though I had not been;
I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.
20 Are not my days few? [5]cease then,
And let me alone, that I may [6]take comfort a little,
21 Before I go whence I shall not return,
Even to the land of darkness and of the shadow of death;
22 A land of thick darkness, as darkness *itself;*
A land of the shadow of death, without any order,
And where the light is as darkness.

[1] Heb. *labour.* [2] Or, *care*
[3] Or, *I am filled with ignominy, but look thou . . . for it increaseth: thou &c.*
[4] Or, *Host after host is against me*
[5] Another reading is, *let him cease, and leave me alone.*
[6] Heb. *brighten up.*

That a somewhat milder spirit at length begins to take possession of the sufferer is indicated by the fact that he ceases to speak of God in the third person, and reverts to his old habit of communing and reasoning with Him directly. Yet it is in this chapter that he reaches the highest point of alienation. As he seeks the rationale of his sufferings, trying to penetrate God's motive for inflicting them, to discover that phase of His character which will throw light upon the mystery of them, he hazards one strange conjecture after another, only to reject each as impossible. Can it be any material advantage to God to afflict him? Can He be short-sighted, so that He sometimes mistakes an innocent man for a guilty? Is He so short-lived that He must crush His intended victims even before they have sinned, lest they survive Him and escape? Hypotheses which imply such limitations in the divine nature are inadmissible. Is He, then, indifferent to the work of His hands? The idea is refuted by the skill and forethought which He has expended upon it. But there is another possibility which thrusts itself upon Job's mind, and which he feels compelled to accept as the bitter truth. His sufferings were from the first designed by God, whose show of kindness in the former part of his life masked the sinister purpose of making his latter end the more exquisitely painful. On this doctrine of a malignant predestination the sufferer dwells with a fascination of horror, asking why God gave him life at all, and pitifully begging for a little ease at the end of it, ere he goes down to the darkness and gloom of Sheol.

1 **I will give free course to my complaint**: lit. 'I will complain upon me.' This very unlikely expression throws suspicion on the text, and the LXX (reading עָלַיּ instead of עָלַי) is evidently correct: **I will give free course to my complaint against him.** V. 1c, a quotation from 7^{11}, should be struck out.

3 **Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress?** The question may be read in three ways, with as many shades of meaning. 'Is it profitable unto thee?' or, 'Doth it please thee?' or 'Doth it beseem thee?' Are Job's sufferings to be explained in terms of utility, or of sovereignty, or of morality? Does the infliction of them yield God some benefit? or gratify His sense of power? or reveal to His rational creatures such a character as they expect of Him? Probably the first is the sense intended; at any rate that is the meaning the words bear in 13^9. **The work of thine hands** is not to be taken as a synonym for the godly, in opposition to 'the wicked' in 3c. It evidently means humanity generally, in whose name Job speaks. 3c is to be deleted as metrically superfluous and substantially irrelevant.

4 **Hast thou eyes of flesh?** The suggestion is that God has perhaps human eyes, and cannot see quite clearly, so that He sometimes mistakes a saint for a sinner. In his perplexity Job turns over every possibility, however fantastic. Contrast Sir 24^{19}, 'The eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun.'

5, 6 Is God so short-lived that He must needs punish Job betimes, even before he is guilty, lest His victim ultimately slip through His hands? Duhm refuses to believe that the poet put into Job's lips anything so absurd, but there is a singular pathos in these consciously extravagant musings of a bewildered mind.

8–12 The clay ventures to expostulate with the Potter. To Job it is a melancholy thought that the Creator should be so enraged against His own wonderful work (cf. Ps 139^{14})—which He fashioned with exquisite skill, and on which He seemed to lavish His affection—as to be bent on destroying it, careless whether it is innocent or guilty. Job cannot but feel that creatorship involves responsibilities. By the qualities displayed in the making of a creature so noble in faculty as man, God begets human Faith; and if He should after all take pleasure in proving that He is not 'a faithful Creator' (1 P 4^{19}), but a wanton destroyer, will not Faith, deceived and betrayed, die

broken-hearted? Against such pessimism Job raises his pathetic protest. The same argument is found even in Omar Khayyám (quatrain 85):

> 'And He that with His hands the vessel made
> Will surely not in after wrath destroy.'

9 **Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast fashioned me as clay; And wilt thou bring me into dust again?** This question —the *cri du cœur* not of an individual, but of humanity—is prompted not so much by man's dread of annihilation as by his irrefragable faith in the ultimate rationality of things. Rabbi ben Ezra, in a more enlightened age, gives the emphatic answer:

> 'Fool! all that is, at all,
> Lasts ever, past recall; . . .
> Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.'

10, 11 **Hast thou not poured me out as milk?** Job dwells on the care bestowed upon him in his ante-natal period, from his conception to his maturity (cf. Ps $139^{15.\ 16}$).

12 **Thou hast granted me life and favour.** Lit. 'Thou hast made' (עָשִׂיתָ); an awkward expression, which throws suspicion on the text. The LXX has ἔθου (evidently reading שַׂמְתָּ). **And thy care hath preserved my spirit** (marg.): lit. oversight, visitation, **providence** (פְּקֻדָּה). Contrast this with Job's idea that God now visits him only as an inquisitor (7^{18}).

13 **Yet these things thou didst hide in thine heart.** Job's searchings into the meaning of innocent suffering result in the agonising conviction, that God has deceived him with a profession of love which has masked the sinister purpose of consummating his misery by giving him that remembrance of happier things which is a sorrow's crown of sorrow. God's present treatment of him reveals His true nature, while His former goodness was only apparent. Human doubt reaches its *ne plus ultra* in the terrible conclusion that behind a smiling providence God hides a frowning face. Displaying his leprous body to its Maker, Job cries in bitterest irony, '**I know that this was with thee**,' *i.e.* in Thy purpose. God was all along treasuring up this dark design; this was the last of life for which the first was planned. The poet evidently intended such a theory to be the *reductio ad absurdum* of the traditional

doctrine of retribution. It is bound up with a theology—even now not quite extinct—which makes one exclaim, 'Your God is my devil!' There is a very famous passage in Calvin's *Institutes* (iii. 23. 7): 'The decree, I admit, is dreadful (Decretum quidem horribile, fateor); and yet it is impossible to deny that God foreknew what the end of man was to be before He made him, and foreknew, because He had so ordained by His decree.'

14, 15 **If I sin . . . If I be wicked.** Job supposes himself pursuing one or other of various lines of conduct. He may **sin**—commit some trivial fault; or he may **be wicked**—guilty of some grave offence; or he may be righteous—morally in the right. The result is always the same: he is spied, condemned, and kept from ever lifting up his head, so that he feels it is vain to fight against his destiny. Nothing can alter God's purpose to hold him guilty and make him miserable. **Being filled with ignominy And looking upon mine affliction.** 'Looking upon' cannot be right. What is required is a parallel to 'filled,' and the word for 'looking upon' (רְאֵה) is very like that for 'drunken' (רְוֵה). Job is 'filled with shame and drunken with sorrow.'

16 **And if my head exalt itself, thou huntest me as a lion.** 'As a lion' is grammatically ambiguous, but doubtless God is figured as the ravening lion and Job as the prey (cf. 16^9). There is irony in the words **thou shewest thyself marvellous.** God's marvellous doings have already been praised by Eliphaz (5^9) and by Job (if 9^{10} is genuine); and now the latter indicates that God's marvels are the plagues with which He tortures the innocent!

17 **Thou renewest thy witnesses against me.** The **witnesses** are the afflictions which testify to the sufferer and everybody else that God holds him guilty. If the Hebrew of 17^c is correct, 'changes and a host' must be a hendiadys meaning 'successive hosts,' 'host after host' (marg.). But most scholars follow the simpler reading of the LXX and the Syriac, 'Thou renewest a host against me,' the sufferer thinking of God's host as His army of plagues. Many critics strike out the line for metrical reasons.

18, 19 Sickened at the thought of all this malice prepense concealed in the divine heart, Job reverts to the question, Wherefore did God ever send him into the world at all? Just a

touch of pity at the beginning of life—the euthanasia of an unconscious babe—would have saved him from a world of sorrows.

20 **Are not my days few?** If God did not relent at the first, will He not now at the last? Job does not know why He has been so angry with him, but he piteously suggests that, at any rate, he has suffered enough. God can still give him a little comfort—that is all that is now possible—if He will but **let him alone.** The days of his life being now so few, he begs for a brief respite from pain—not a great boon to crave—ere he goes down to the land of eternal darkness. 'In what other poem in the world is there pathos deep as this?'[1] In 20^{a} the hiatus is strange, and the word for 'cease'—lit. 'let him cease'—very awkward. The LXX reads, 'Are not the days of my life few?' the consonants of the words for 'let him cease' (יֶחְדַּל) and 'my life' (חַדְלִי) being the same, only in different order. This is a distinct improvement. The word translated **I may take comfort** means 'I may brighten up'—what Job in the midst of his troubles has often tried in vain to do (9^{27}).

21 **I shall not return**: cf. $7^{9.10}$ 14^{7-22}. On 'the shadow of death,' see 3^{5}.

22 This verse has three lines instead of two, and the second **darkness** and **the shadow of death** should probably be deleted as dittographs (see 21). The couplet then reads, 'A land of darkness, without any order, And where the light is as darkness.' The LXX differs considerably from the Massoretic text, reading, 'Into a land of eternal darkness, where there is no light nor sight of the life of mortals.' To die is to pass into the shadow of night, without any hope of dawn. The Babylonian poem on the Descent of Ishtar to Hades calls the underworld 'the dark house, whose inhabitants have no light, where light sees them not, sitting in darkness.'[2] Duhm would strike out the whole of $v.^{22}$, on the ground that a mere enumeration of the attributes of Sheol is not poetry; but it suited Job's sombre mood to ring the changes on the notes of Hadean gloom. The poet wishes to represent his hero as a believer in the dreary traditional doctrine, before he throws a shaft or two of light even into the darkness of death.

[1] Froude, 307. [2] Jeremias, *op. cit.* ii. 256.

XI. 1–20.

THE VOICE OF POPULAR WISDOM.

1 Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,
2 Should not the multitude of words be answered?
And should a man full of talk be justified?
3 Should thy boastings make men hold their peace?
And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?
4 For thou sayest, My doctrine is pure,
And I am clean in thine eyes.
5 But Oh that God would speak,
And open his lips against thee;
6 And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom,
[1]That it is manifold in effectual working!
Know therefore that God [2]exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.
7 [3]Canst thou by searching find out God?
Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?
8 [4]It is high as heaven; what canst thou do?
Deeper than [5]Sheol; what canst thou know?
9 The measure thereof is longer than the earth,
And broader than the sea.
10 If he pass through, and shut up,
And [6]call unto judgement, then who can hinder him?
11 For he knoweth vain men:
He seeth iniquity also, [7]even though he consider it not.
12 [8]But vain man is void of understanding,
Yea, man is born *as* a wild ass's colt.
13 If thou set thine heart aright,
And stretch out thine hands toward him;
14 If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away,
And let not unrighteousness dwell in thy tents;
15 Surely then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot;
Yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear:
16 For thou shalt forget thy misery;
Thou shalt remember it as waters that are passed away:
17 And *thy* life shall [9]be clearer than the noonday;
Though there be darkness, it shall be as the morning.
18 And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope:
Yea, thou shalt search *about thee*, and shalt take thy rest in safety.

19 Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid;
Yea, many shall make suit unto thee.
20 But the eyes of the wicked shall fail,
And [10]they shall have no way to flee,
And their hope shall be the giving up of the ghost.

[1] Or, *For sound wisdom is manifold*
[2] Or, *remitteth* (Heb. *causeth to be forgotten*) *unto thee of thine iniquity*
[3] Or, *Canst thou find out the deep things of God?*
[4] Heb. *The heights of heaven.* [5] Or, *the grave*
[6] Heb. *call an assembly.* [7] Or, *and him that considereth not*
[8] Or, *But an empty man will get understanding, when a wild ass's colt is born a man*
[9] Or, *arise above* [10] Heb. *refuge is perished from them.*

Zophar's character is as sharply etched as that of Eliphaz and of Bildad. His mind has no background of mystery, and his manner no show of punctilious courtesy. His affinities are neither with awful revelations nor with hoary traditions. He is a plain orthodox dogmatist, who expresses his views with the aid of witty, popular proverbs, makes his debating points with a rough and ready vigour, and is troubled by no misgivings as to the finality of his faith. Merely incensed by Job's protestations of innocence and cries for light, he regards him as a sophist who is seeking to justify himself, a scoffer who needs to be silenced, a sinner who is receiving merited punishment and not taking it well. He sincerely wishes that God would feel moved to give Job a practical lesson of wisdom. But he deprecates as both impious and futile the attempt to penetrate the divine secrets of wisdom. Job's speculative questionings seem to him a mad endeavour to scale the Heavens or sound the depths of Sheol. For himself, he holds that wisdom is made known to man only on its practical side. Its function is the education and correction of fools. Its task is accomplished when 'an empty man gets understanding, and a wild ass's colt is tamed.' If Job will accept its discipline, and put away his sin, he will yet forget his misery; but let him take warning that the wicked man has no way of refuge and his hope is—death.

2 Eliphaz began his speech with a fine courtesy (4^2), but Zophar at once characterises Job's utterances as **a multitude of words** and himself as **a man full of talk**, lit. 'a man of lips,' a babbler. The new language which Job has been learning in the

school of suffering is regarded by impatient common sense as so much verbiage.

3 **And when thou mockest** (וְהַלְעֵג), **shall no man make thee ashamed?** Zophar understands Job's speeches so far as to be sure that they are sceptical, irreligious, even blasphemous. They similarly impress Elihu, who accuses Job of drinking up 'scorning' (לַעַג) like water (34^7).

4 **For thou sayest, My doctrine is pure.** This reading is doubtful. Job has not, in point of fact, asserted that his doctrine, but rather that his life, is right. In his present perplexity he is anything but a doctrinaire. But what he vehemently maintains is that he is pure in deeds; and the LXX actually reads *καθαρός εἰμι τοῖς ἔργοις*. Slightly changing the Heb. text (לִקְחִי into לֶכְתִּי), Beer and Duhm read, 'My way (or walk) is pure.' This gives an exact parallel to the next line, 'And I am clean in Thine eyes.'

5 Job having breathed a passionate longing for a meeting with God in judgment (9^{32-35}), Zophar brusquely replies, **Oh that God would speak!** Job would soon regret his rash and foolish wish. For Zophar knows that if God were to **open his lips,** it would be to speak **against** Job, bringing his guilt home to him. This is a plain man's inference from plain facts—Job's losses and disease—in which Zophar recognises the judgment of an angry God.

6 With Job's desire to know the secrets of divine wisdom, his irreverent prying into the mysteries of providence, Zophar has no sympathy or patience; but he devoutly wishes that God would show him the **secrets of wisdom** in its **effectual working** —that He would, in fact, bring Job down from the cloudland of speculation and give him a plain lesson in wisdom, a display of its operation on the lives of foolish human beings. The epithet applied by the RV to 'effectual wisdom' is **manifold** (כִּפְלַיִם), which gives a good enough sense; but the real meaning of the Heb. word is 'double' (cf. Is 40^1), which supplies no satisfactory meaning. Making a slight change, Merx and Cheyne read, 'That effectual wisdom is like wonders' (כְּפִלְאִים). **Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.** Lit. 'God bringeth some of thy guilt into forgetful-

ness with thee.' If Job's sins were all punished, his sufferings would be still greater. One would gladly believe that even the harshest of his critics did not address him in so ruthless a fashion, and the LXX has a somewhat milder reading: 'that thy deserts have happened unto thee from the Lord for thy sins.' Duhm (following Bickell) deletes the sentence on the ground that it is a superfluous third line, that it is unrhythmical, and that it is inconsistent with $v.^{13f.}$.

7 Read as in marg., **Canst thou find out the deep things** (חֵקֶר) **of God?** Job has been trying to find out what there is either in God's stable character or in His changing mood that explains his suffering. He has questioned God, as if God were answerable to him. Zophar is shocked at this presumptuous curiosity, and asks in amazement, **Canst thou reach to the perfection** (תַּכְלִית, the inmost being, the essence) **of the Almighty?** His own simple, unspeculative mind, pricked by no divine discontent, troubled by no desire to know the causes of things, would find itself at home in such modest utterances as Dt 29^{29}.

8, 9 **It is high as heaven; what canst thou do?** Making a slight change, many read, **It is higher than heaven** (Vulg. 'excelsior caelo est'), which suits the other three comparatives. Job need not try to measure the immeasurable. The height and depth, the length and breadth of divine wisdom are far beyond the comprehension of man, who should bow his head and acknowledge his limitations. His impotence is equal to his ignorance —**What canst thou do? . . . What canst thou know?** Doubtless the poet had often had these questions, with which all explorers in new realms of truth are familiar, put to himself.

10 This verse contains echoes of some of Job's former words ($9^{11.\ 12}$), and was probably once a marginal gloss.

11 **He seeth iniquity also, even though he consider it not.** God's knowledge is immediate, intuitive, effortless. Duhm doubts whether such a conception of omniscience would have been intelligible to the ancient mind, and would read, 'He seeth iniquity also, and payeth regard to it,' the words for 'not' and 'to it' (לֹא and לוֹ) being almost the same. Others translate,

'He seeth iniquity where man doth not discern it,' *i.e.* sees sin in us where we are not conscious of it.

12 Here the RV does not do justice to Zophar's shrewd common sense. He would never have uttered anything so pleonastic as 'But vain (נָבוּב, empty, hollow-minded) man is void of understanding'; nor was he speculative enough to propound a theory of inherited sin, 'Yea, man is born *as* a wild ass's colt.' Exercising the privilege of a candid friend, and being convinced that Job needs to be brought to repentance, he says, **So** (through the practical working of divine wisdom) **a vain man gets understanding, And a wild ass's colt is born a man**; or, as Budde suggests—making a change in the word for 'born' (יִוָּלֵד into יִלָּמֵד) and omitting 'man' as an explanatory gloss—'And a wild ass's colt is tamed'; or the poet may have written, 'And a wild ass's colt of a man (cf. Gn 16^{12}) is tamed.' While Zophar speaks generally, he has, of course, a particular case in view, and, with characteristic plainness of speech, suggests the hope that *this* wild ass's colt will be the better for his chastisement.

13–19 Zophar is now lavish in promises that, if Job will accept his affliction in a proper spirit—with a heart set aright—if he will pray, and cleanse his hands and his house from sin, his moral amendment will be followed by a return of all his old prosperity. Job's guilt is assumed, not on the evidence of credible witnesses, but as a plain man's inference from his sufferings. Sacred and infallible dogmas are far more reliable guides than men's erring senses.

17 **And *thy* life shall be clearer than the noonday.** The LXX supplies the necessary pronoun, which the Heb. text omits. **Though there be darkness, it shall be as the morning.** Suggesting that the line contains an antithesis to Job's mournful description of Sheol, where 'the light is as darkness' (10^{22}), Davidson takes it to mean that if ever, in the happy future, temporary darkness should fall on Job, it would be like the morning—only a twilight, not the gloom of midnight. This is perhaps too subtle for the mind of Zophar, who merely predicts that Job's *present* darkness will soon be dispelled by the morning light.

18 Job is promised such a life of tranquil security as always

falls to the lot of good men. **Yea, thou shalt search** *about* **thee, and shalt take thy rest in safety.** Before retiring to rest the sheikh looks carefully round his tent to see that all is well. Job has often done it in the happy past, and may yet do it again in the happy future. Duhm regards this line as a marginal quotation of Is 17^2, and then reads the remaining lines of the speech as a quatrain.

19 **Yea, many shall make suit to thee**: lit. 'make thy face sweet' or 'pleasant.' It is one of the marks of a man's returning prosperity, that others come to pay court to him. Except here and in Ps 45^{13}, Pr 19^6, the idiom is used always of man's entreating the favour of God.

20 Not being quite confident that Job will fulfil the conditions of returning prosperity, Zophar ends on the note of warning. There is no refuge for the godless, and (ironically) their hope is —the breathing out of life (מַפַּח נֶפֶשׁ). The man who longs for death (as Job has done) is in danger of being taken at his word, and numbered among 'the wicked.'

XII. 1–25.

DIVINE POWER AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

1 Then Job answered and said,
2 No doubt but ye are the people,
And wisdom shall die with you.
3 But I have understanding as well as you;
I am not inferior to you:
Yea, who knoweth not such things as these?
4 I am as one that is a laughing-stock to his neighbour,
A man that called upon God, and he answered him:
The just, the perfect man is a laughing-stock.
5 In the thought of him that is at ease there is contempt for misfortune;
It is ready for them whose foot slippeth.
6 The tents of robbers prosper,
And they that provoke God are secure;
[1]Into whose hand God bringeth *abundantly*.
7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee;
And the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee;
And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.
9 Who knoweth not [2]in all these,
That the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?
10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing,
And the [3]breath of all mankind.
11 Doth not the ear try words,
Even as the palate tasteth its meat?
12 [4]With aged men is wisdom,
And in length of days understanding.
13 With him is wisdom and might;
He hath counsel and understanding.
14 Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again;
He shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.
15 Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up;
Again, he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.
16 With him is strength and [5]effectual working;
The deceived and the deceiver are his.
17 He leadeth counsellors away spoiled,
And judges maketh he fools.
18 He looseth the bond of kings,
And bindeth their loins with a girdle.
19 He leadeth priests away spoiled,
And overthroweth the mighty.
20 He removeth the speech of the trusty,
And taketh away the understanding of the elders.
21 He poureth contempt upon princes,
And looseth the belt of the strong.
22 He discovereth deep things out of darkness,
And bringeth out to light the shadow of death.
23 He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them:
He spreadeth the nations abroad, and [6]bringeth them in.
24 He taketh away the heart of the chiefs of the people of the [7]earth,
And causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.
25 They grope in the dark without light,
And he maketh them to [8]stagger like a drunken man.

[1] Or, *That bring* their *god in their hand* [2] Or, *by* [3] Or, *spirit*
[4] Or, *With aged men*, ye say, *is wisdom* [5] Or, *sound wisdom*
[6] Or, *leadeth them away* [7] Or, *land* [8] Heb. *wander.*

Sermonised, admonished, and rebuked by his friends, Job has not till now dealt directly with their discourses. He has been too preoccupied with God's actions and attitude to give very

much heed to their erring human judgments, and, while their unkindness has deepened his sense of lonely misery, their arguments have left him unmoved. Not till each of them has spoken, and their rebukes have culminated in Zophar's intolerable insults, does he assume the offensive and directly assail their doctrine. They have talked to him as if they had the monopoly of wisdom. He admits their claim in jest, but only to deny it in earnest. He is not behind them in understanding. The truth with which they have been indoctrinating him is so elementary that one might learn it from every creature in earth and air and sea. Job has never questioned the divine wisdom and power which have stirred their eloquence. The question which he has raised, and which they have hitherto refused to face, is whether infinite wisdom and power are controlled by justice and directed to moral ends. In a series of rapid sketches, evidently drawn from life, he shows them disaster overtaking the noble and the good, the wise and the great, leaving them to decide whether the Power which makes itself known by these providences does or does not make for righteousness.

2 **No doubt but ye are the people.** The sarcasm is levelled at all the three friends, though specially meant for the last speaker, whose arrogance has provoked it. 'Superior persons' is the rendering suggested by the *Oxf. Heb. Lex.* for 'the people' (עָם). 'Supermen' is a modern word often used with a similar flavour of irony. It is possible that 'the people' means 'the nation,' in which case the saying resembles the famous *L'état c'est moi.* The secrets of wisdom are known to the Three alone, and when they die, she will die with them, leaving a world of fools. The Heb. noun is without the art., which Duhm would insert, thinking it has fallen out by mistake. Bickell suggests that the adj. 'intelligent,' 'prudent' (נָבוֹן) has been lost; and Klostermann, that the word for 'people' is the last two consonants of the word for 'they that have knowledge' (הַיְּדְעִים), the rest having been obliterated. Beer suggests 'subtle' (עֲרוּמִים).

3 **But I have understanding:** lit. 'heart'; see note on 11^{12}. Job mildly protests that he is not so unintelligent as they suppose. How well he knows all the old recipes with which they would heal a sufferer's wounds. Many scholars omit 'I

am not inferior to you,' which is in its right place in 13^2, but here metrically *de trop*, besides being too earnest for so ironical a context. **Such things as these** are such platitudes as Zophar has uttered regarding divine wisdom.

4–6 These verses break the train of thought, and are regarded by most critics as a later insertion. In vv.$^{2.\ 3}$ the question is whether Job has less *wisdom* than his friends; but here his complaint is that his *piety* does not save him from being derided by prosperous and impious men. This line of thought recalls the murmurings of the 'poor' and 'meek' in the later Psalms against their ungodly neighbours, rather than a discussion of the wise regarding the mysteries of Providence. It is significant that the LXX has a very different text, and entirely omits $^{4a.\ b}$. The seventh verse follows the third quite naturally.

5 Many attempts have been made to amend this very difficult verse. The LXX is entirely different from the Heb. text, and several ancient versions begin with 'He (the righteous man) is a despised lamp' (Vulg. 'lampas contempta'). The RV gives a good sense, though perhaps not the one intended: **In the thought of him that is at ease there is contempt for misfortune; It** (contempt) **is ready for them whose foot slippeth.** 'He that is at ease' (שַׁאֲנַן, secure, careless, free from misfortune, arrogant) is a technical term of the later theology, the opposite of the 'poor' and 'meek.'

6 The third line does violence to the Hebrew, which should probably be rendered **That bring** *their* **god in their hand** (marg.), the **robbers** having no other god than their sword; cf. Hab $1^{11.\ 16}$ and Virgil's 'dextra mihi deus.' This does not suit the context well, and it is better (with Siegfried) to amend the text and read, 'Who lifteth his hand against God.'

7–10 After this interruption, we again hear the unmistakable notes of Job's irony. He is dealing with the great truth which his friends have sought to impress on his mind, that with God is wisdom and might. A most valuable lesson, he replies, but one which you may learn from any of the creatures that fly or walk or swim. No need, therefore, for the revelations of Eliphaz, the traditions of Bildad, or the common sense of Zophar to enforce it. The lower animals may be said to teach what one

learns from the study of their ways. Cf. Wordsworth's 'Let Nature be your teacher.'

8 **Or speak to the earth.** This can scarcely be right. What is required is a parallel to beasts, fowls, and fishes. Hitzig and others read, 'Or the swarming things (שֶׁרֶץ) of the earth,' and Duhm, 'Or the creeping things (זוֹחֲלֵי) of the earth.' All God's works have lessons for the receptive mind, but Job refers here only to sentient creatures, capable like himself of suffering.

9 **the hand of the LORD**: *i.e.* the hand of Jahweh. This name appears nowhere else in the Dialogues except in 28^{28}, which belongs to an interpolated passage. Its use here is probably a transcriber's error, and some MSS have 'Eloah.' The words **hath wrought this** are difficult to construe. They can scarcely mean 'hath made this life of animated nature,' or 'this whole visible world.' They may stand for 'hath wrought thus,' *i.e.* as the friends have said, in wisdom and might. Duhm regards the line as an extract from Is 41^{20}, and takes this fact, along with the use of 'Jahweh,' as a proof that the verse is spurious.

11 Job has discovered the principle which must guide him in his search for truth. If his palate tries some **meat** and finds it nauseous, nothing can convince him that it is pleasant; and if certain forms of **words**—revelations, traditions, or popular apothegms, such as are commended to him by his friends—are not approved by his **ear** (used by metonymy for his reason and conscience), it is vain to tell him that they are hallowed by age, or have been regarded as the word of God. Job asserts his independence, at once claiming his privilege, and confessing his obligation, to think and judge for himself.

12, 13 **With aged men is wisdom.** If these words are read as in the AV and RV, they must have strayed out of one of the friends' speeches; but if they are made interrogative, they at once become relevant. **Is wisdom with aged men? And understanding with length of days?** This leads naturally to the emphatic statement that **with him** (God) **is wisdom and might.**

14–25 In these verses the poet, seizing upon episodes and experiences which he has lived through, and bathing them in the

heightened or softened light of his own imagination, presents them as evidences of the fact that God is the author of both weal and woe, and that the mysterious vicissitudes of fortune may throw even the best of men (such as Job) into helpless perplexity. Having no such categories as Nature and Providence, Fate or Chance, to work with—no middle region in which to locate the inexplicabilities of things—his one Cause is God. And yet in the whole of this stupendous passage, as in several others, Job never once says 'God,' but always 'HE.'

14, 15 He breaks down fair cities, and they lie in ruins; He imprisons a patriot whose life is invaluable to the commonwealth, and leaves him to die; He brings upon the earth now droughts and now floods. Each verse is introduced with an astonished **Behold**, and raises in the most reverent, as well as the most sceptical, mind a bewildered, though it may be an unspoken, Why?

16 Another passage of sombre irony. Zophar has expressed the wish that Job might know the effectual working of wisdom (11^6). Job grimly replies that he knows it already: **With him** (God) **is effectual working, The deceived and the deceiver are his.** The effectual Worker is responsible for them both! It must not, of course, be supposed that the dramatist accepts all the pessimism of which his leading character is the exponent, but it is probable that such gloomy thoughts had often troubled and perplexed his own mind. 'Job is the type of those great thinkers who cannot compromise; who faithfully follow their intellect to its last results and admit all its conclusions.'[1] And Job's determinism was never more popular than it is to-day. 'This Intelligence,' says a living theist, 'must from all time have so arranged the universe that not only saints and martyrs, philosophers, heroes, poets shall think its thoughts, feel with it, and will its will, but that every kind of savage and lecherous monster shall feel, think, will with it also.'[2]

17–21 Under the all-wise and all-powerful government of God it is an incontrovertible fact that counsellors and judges, kings and priests, the mighty and the trusty, elders and princes, who are the highest embodiments of human wisdom and power,

[1] *Mark Rutherford*, 284.
[2] W. H. Mallock, *Reconstruction of Belief*, 205.

are overwhelmed with disaster. Can it be maintained that they merit their appointed lot?

17 To secure a better parallelism, and to avoid the words 'He leadeth away spoiled,' which belong to v.[19], Duhm, with the help of the LXX, reads, 'He maketh counsellors of the earth foolish' (שֹׁבֵל or סִבֵּל for שׁוֹלֵל). The times are so much out of joint that the rulers are driven to their wits' end.

18 He (God) dethrones kings, loosing the bond which they lay upon the nations, and binding themselves instead. In Ps 149^{8} Jahweh is praised for binding kings with chains; but Job is thinking of the overthrow, not of tyrants, but of beneficent rulers, and he asks his friends to harmonise that fact with the justice of God. It is evident that the poet lived in a period of political and social unrest (see Introd. p. 19). Instead of 'girdle' Duhm reads 'fetter' (אֱסוֹר for אֵזוֹר), as binding a man with a girdle would mean strengthening him.

19 For 'spoiled' read **barefoot** (שׁוֹלֵל, *stripped* as to walking). Will the traditionalists assert that the priests are led away in such ignominy for their sins?

21 In the second line read, **He removeth the belt of the strong**. As the Heb. word for 'strong' means elsewhere 'channels,' it cannot be right here; and for אֲפִיקִים Beer suggests תַּקִּיפִים (as in Dn $2^{40.42}$). Duhm prefers the ordinary word אַבִּירִים.

22 The **deep things** which He discovers may be either His own hidden decrees or the secret thoughts and deeds of men; but it is difficult to relate such an abstraction to the concrete facts of the context. While Budde rejects the verse as a meaningless excrescence, Duhm thinks that, if original, it signifies that God overthrows rulers and puts the lower orders in their place, —an ingenious interpretation which certainly does not lie on the surface.

23 The rise and the fall of nations are similarly traced to God's immediate action, which does not seem to be controlled by any moral principle. It is not the poet's habit to use the same word, as here, in successive lines, but he often used synonyms, and we should perhaps read 'peoples' for 'nations' in the second

line. For 'bringeth them in' substitute **leadeth them away captive**, though the word for 'lead' (Hiph. of נָחָה) does not seem to be anywhere else used in this unfavourable sense.

24, 25 The LXX lightens the overloaded first line by omitting 'of the people'; ^{24b} is found in Ps 107^{40}, and ^{25b} resembles Ps 107^{27}. **He maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.** These are 'words tremendous and dangerous,' says a thoughtful writer, who comments on the whole passage: 'Job . . . feels the ground shake under him as he is compelled to admit that He whom he worshipped holds both cheat and victim in His hand, smites the eloquent with paralytic stammerings, turns the old man into a melancholy childish driveller, and causes nations to swerve over precipices, under the guidance of leaders whom He has blinded.'[1]

XIII. 1–22.

TURNING FROM FRIENDS TO GOD.

1 Lo, mine eye hath seen all *this*,
Mine ear hath heard and understood it.
2 What ye know, *the same* do I know also:
I am not inferior unto you.
3 Surely I would speak to the Almighty,
And I desire to reason with God.
4 But ye are forgers of lies,
Ye are all physicians of no value.
5 Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace!
And it should be your wisdom.
6 Hear now my reasoning,
And hearken to the pleadings of my lips.
7 Will ye speak unrighteously for God,
And talk deceitfully for him?
8 Will ye [1]respect his person?
Will ye contend for God?
9 Is it good that he should search you out?
Or as one [2]deceiveth a man, will ye [3]deceive him?
10 He will surely reprove you,
If ye do secretly [4]respect persons.

[1] *Mark Rutherford*, 284.

11 Shall not his excellency make you afraid,
And his dread fall upon you?
12 Your memorable sayings *are* proverbs of ashes,
Your defences *are* defences of clay.
13 Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak,
And let come on me what will.
14 [5]Wherefore should I take my flesh in my teeth,
And put my life in mine hand?
15 [6]Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him:
Nevertheless I will [7]maintain my ways before him.
16 [8]This also shall be my salvation;
[9]For a godless man shall not come before him.
17 Hear diligently my speech,
And let my declaration be in your ears.
18 Behold now, I have ordered my cause;
I know that I [10]am righteous.
19 Who is he that will contend with me?
For now [11]shall I hold my peace and give up the ghost.
20 Only do not two things unto me,
Then will I not hide myself from thy face:
21 Withdraw thine hand far from me;
And let not thy terror make me afraid.
22 Then call thou, and I will answer;
Or let me speak, and answer thou me.

[1] Or, *shew him favour* [2] Or, *mocketh* [3] Or, *mock*
[4] Or, *shew favour* [5] Or, *At all adventures I will take &c.*
[6] Or, *Behold, he will slay me; I wait for him* or, according to another reading, *I will not wait* or, *I have no hope*
[7] Heb. *argue.* [8] Or, *He* [9] Or, *That*
[10] Or, *shall be justified* [11] Or, *if I hold my peace, I shall give up &c.*

Job's complaint against his friends, as disputants with him, is that they resolutely shut their eyes to obvious facts. They have the vice of all partisans—they see what they wish to see and nothing more. As special pleaders for God, they are forgers of lies; and, as healers of spiritual wounds, physicians of no value. It is impossible for them, with the knowledge which they possess, honestly to maintain their antiquated doctrine of providence; and if, as flatterers of God, they still profess to believe that He always makes it well with the righteous and ill with the wicked, He will not be grateful to them for their fulsome adulation, but expose and punish their insincerity. As apologists for His government of the world, they go on teaching dogmas and using arguments which are now proverbs of ashes and defences of

clay. Therefore Job, realising the folly of taking counsel any longer with his friends, turns from them to God, resolved to plead his cause, if it be possible, face to face with Him. It will be the most perilous of all encounters, but he will hazard it, in the hope of yet obtaining justice. Strong in his consciousness of innocence, and tranquillised by the reflection that an ungodly man would never willingly come into God's presence, he only stipulates for two conditions which will enable him to enter on his trial with a self-possessed mind—the alleviation of his present sufferings, and the mitigation of God's terrible majesty. If these terms are granted, he is indifferent as to the form of procedure which may be adopted, being ready to appear before God either as plaintiff or as defendant.

1, 2 **What ye know,** *the same* **do I know also.** Having first ironically admired his friends' wisdom, Job presently subjects it to merciless criticism and covers it with contempt. Their superiority to himself, which they have taken for granted in every syllable they have uttered, and which he has for a moment admitted, he now categorically denies. He is not inferior unto them, he asserts with quiet dignity. What they have propounded as to the power, dominion, and unfathomable wisdom of God is commonplace to him. Having used his **eye** and his **ear** to some purpose, he has acquainted himself with all that can be learned of the character of God from observation and experience. **all this.** While the Hebrew has simply 'all,' the LXX reads 'these things' (ταῦτα) without 'all.' The original may have contained both words.

3 The translation **Surely** (אוּלָם) misses Job's point. Read, **But I** (emphatic) **would speak to the Almighty,** the conjunction of strong antithesis being required. With a feeling of revulsion, Job turns from the harsh judgment of his former friends to seek the verdict of God, hoping against hope that it will yet be just. In the same way St. Paul (1 Co 4^{3-5}), cruelly misjudged, but knowing nothing against himself, appeals from the verdict of men, which, after all, is a very small thing, to the awful and infallible judgment of Him who will make manifest the counsels of the heart.

4–12 Here, as so often elsewhere, Job is evidently driven backward and forward by conflicting feelings, so that he is still

prevented from turning at once to God. He cannot have done with his friends without first indignantly castigating their unworthy motives. So he addresses them in other eight verses of scathing criticism.

4 As self-constituted advocates of God, they are **forgers** (or **plasterers**) **of lies**, whitewashing the moral government of the world, denying the anomalies and mysteries of life, calling confusion order, discord harmony, and injustice justice. And as spiritual **physicians** they are worthless, professing to heal diseases which they cannot even diagnose—assuming, in the face of the clearest evidence, that his suffering is rooted in sin, and mocking him with optimistic promises of restoration to health and happiness on the condition that he shall charge himself with crimes which he knows he has never committed.

5 **Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace!** The sarcasm is apparently the same as that found in Pr 17[28], 'Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise'; cf. *si tacuisses, philosophus mansisses.* But it is possible that Job, now in deadly earnest, means that if they would but be silent and listen while he pleads and reasons with God, they would have the opportunity of acquiring wisdom,—they might get at the meaning of the moral laws of life and the principles of divine justice.

6 **my reasoning.** The LXX reads '**the rebuke** (ἔλεγχον) **of my mouth,**' which gives a perfect parallelism with the second line.

7, 8 **Will ye speak unrighteously for God?** Feeling that his friends have become hopelessly incapable of taking direct, simple, unselfish views, Job rebukes them as partisans of God, flatterers of power, who say that whatever He does *must* be right; sycophants, who distort the truth for His glory, and **respect his person** because they wish to keep on the safe and winning side.

9 **Is it good that he should search you out?** Is it profitable? (cf. 10[3]). Knowing his friends to be utilitarians, who serve God, by no means for nought, but for personal and material benefits, Job asks if they think it will be *to their advantage* to have their souls laid bare and all their motives scrutinised by other eyes than man's. They have to do with a heart-searching God, and

do they imagine that they can deceive Him **as a man is deceived?** One of Lowell's characters remarks with equally caustic irony, if with somewhat less reverence:

> 'You must get up in the mornin',
> If you want to take in God.'

10 **He will surely reprove you.** Instead of thanking them for their secret partiality, which is no secret to Him, He will sharply rebuke them, scorning to be the object of their base and fulsome flattery. Nothing could be psychologically finer or morally nobler than this sudden illogical return on Job's part to faith in God's righteousness. Let him reason as he will about the anomalies of providence, he cannot stifle the intuition that in the innermost being of God there burns for ever that same scorn of all falsity and meanness which is so swiftly kindled in his own breast.

11 **Shall not his excellency make you afraid?** In the majesty or elevation (שְׂאֵת) of His presence they will see themselves as they are, and conscience will make them cowards. They will dread an imminent retribution at the hands of a righteously angry God who comes to judgment.

12 **proverbs of ashes . . . defences of clay.** These terms are applied by Job to the effete dogmas and apologetics of his friends. Here the poet evidently speaks through his hero. There was a time in history when teachings and reasonings not unlike those of the friends were words of fire and munitions of rock. When the doctrine of retribution was used in the golden age of prophecy to justify the divine overthrow of a corrupt and faithless nation (Is 3^{10}), it had all the fire and force of eternal truth; but when it is employed, in totally different conditions, to explain the sufferings of innocent men, it sinks to ashes and crumbles to dust.

13–19 Succeeding at last in diverting his thoughts from his friends, Job recalls his resolve (v.^{3}) to speak to the Almighty. But no sooner does he turn his mind Godwards, than it becomes an arena of conflicting emotions, courage and fear striving for the mastery. He realises that he cannot plead his cause before God without imperilling his life. Yet he will do it at all hazards, and his very courage gives him a presentiment of victory. He

is confident that he will be justified; that, indeed, no one will plead against him.

13 **let me alone, that I may speak.** I is emphatic in the Heb. The friends having spoken their best for God and against Job, the critical moment has come when Job must speak in self-defence, not to men, but to God; and the frail human personality rises in unconquerable majesty to assert its innocence before Omnipotence. **let come on me what will.** It is the uncertainty of God's moods that makes His creatures tremble before Him, and Job fears that his audacity will make God more wrathful than ever. But, realising that, at the worst, God can only slay him, and feeling that, if God be unjust, death is as good as life, he is utterly reckless of the consequences of his sublime daring.

14 **Wherefore** (עַל־מָה) should be omitted (with the LXX) as probably due to dittography (עָלַי מָה in 13[6]). Read, **I will take my flesh in my teeth.** The figure, which is found nowhere else, is apparently suggested by the idea of a wild beast at bay, defending its life with its teeth; the parallelism with the next line indicating that 'flesh' and 'life' are synonymous. **I will put my life in my hand** is a familiar metaphor, meaning, 'I will run the utmost risk' (Jg 12[3], 1 S 19[5] 28[21], Ps 119[109]).

15 **Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him.** Along with 'wait for him,' or 'it' (לוֹ), the Heb. gives the alternative 'not (לֹא) wait.' We then get a great variety of possible renderings: 'He will slay me; I wait for him (to strike),' or, 'I have no hope' (both in marg.); or, 'I wait for it,' *i.e.* death; or, 'I have no hope' (Duhm); or, 'I can wait (be patient) no longer' (Cheyne). Uncertain as the text is, the general sense is clearly indicated by the context. The fear of death will not deter Job from saying 'Not guilty' to God. If God is a tyrant, and determines to slay him, He will only be shedding innocent blood. Pascal says, 'Were the Universe to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which has slain him, because he knows that he dies, and that the Universe has the better of him. The Universe knows nothing of this.' While the modern writer admires intelligent man facing an unintelligent Universe, which has the power to crush him, the

ancient poet is awed at the thought of man as a moral being confronting the Maker and Ruler of an immoral Universe, who may have the will to annihilate him. The one reveals the majesty of mind opposing matter, the other the still greater majesty of conscience opposing omnipotent tyranny. **I will maintain my ways before him.** Job thus makes his reason for venturing into the presence of God perfectly clear. The one thing which he passionately desires is not the restoration of his happiness, but the vindication of his righteousness. 'Thus virtue has intrinsic value for Job, superior to that of prosperity or even life; moral victory would more than compensate for physical failure.'[1]

16 **This also shall be my salvation.** Having once determined to plead his cause before God, Job is strangely comforted by the thought that 'a godless man shall not come before Him.' Though God has been unaccountably hostile to him, He must, after all, be the Protector of innocence; and if a man dares to approach Him in the strength of a good conscience, He will be moved to show Himself in His true attributes.

18 Here the AV, which has **I shall be justified,** is perhaps better than the RV, which has 'I am righteous.' Job is inspired by the hope of being vindicated when his case comes on for trial.

19 So certain is he of his innocence that he thinks nobody will venture to plead against him, simply because there is no possible ground of impeachment. But if a case *should* after all be got up against him, with a shameless determination to have him condemned at all costs, then—with an infinite scorn he says it—he would be silent and die. Tacitly acknowledging himself beaten, and accepting without a murmur his unjust sentence of death, he would go to meet his doom. In which case one feels that he would merit the epitaph:

> 'The loving worm within its clod
> Is diviner than a loveless God.'

But he refuses to anticipate any such possible issue; for the conviction grows ever stronger in his mind that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, justice is at length about to triumph.

[1] Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 28.

20–22 As once before (9^{34}), Job begs of God two favours, as preconditions of his appearance before Him—that his pain should be eased, and that God's dazzling splendour should be veiled. On those terms he will surrender every forensic advantage, and appear either as plaintiff, stating the charges to which he would desire God to reply, or as defendant, answering whatever accusations God may bring against him. Here a brief pause has to be imagined, after which Job, assuming that God desires him to speak first, brings forward his case.

XIII. 23–XIV. 22.

THE THOUGHT OF AN AFTER-LIFE.

23 How many are mine iniquities and sins?
Make me to know my trangression and my sin.
24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face,
And holdest me for thine enemy?
25 Wilt thou harass a driven leaf?
And wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?
26 For thou writest bitter things against me,
And makest me to inherit the iniquities of my youth:
27 Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and markest all my paths;
Thou drawest thee a line about the soles of my feet:
28 [1]Though I am like a rotten thing that consumeth,
Like a garment that is moth-eaten.
XIV. 1 Man that is born of a woman
Is of few days, and full of trouble.
2 He cometh forth like a flower, and [2]is cut down:
He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.
3 And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one,
And bringest me into judgement with thee?
4 [3]Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.
5 Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months is with thee,
And thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;
6 Look away from him, that he may [4]rest,
Till he shall [5]accomplish, as an hireling, his day.
7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
And that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,
And the stock thereof die in the ground;
9 Yet through the scent of water it will bud,
And put forth boughs like a plant.
10 But man dieth, and [6]wasteth away:
Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?
11 [7]*As* the waters [8]fail from the sea,
And the river decayeth and drieth up;
12 So man lieth down and riseth not:
Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake,
Nor be roused out of their sleep.
13 Oh that thou wouldest hide me in [9]Sheol,
That thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past,
That thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!
14 If a man die, shall he live *again*?
All the days of my warfare [10]would I wait,
Till my [11]release should come.
15 [12]Thou shouldest call, and I would answer thee:
Thou wouldest have a desire to the work of thine hands.
16 But now thou numberest my steps:
Dost thou not watch over my sin?
17 My transgression is sealed up in a bag,
And thou fastenest up mine iniquity.
18 And surely the mountain falling [13]cometh to nought,
And the rock is removed out of its place;
19 The waters wear the stones;
The overflowings thereof wash away the dust of the earth:
And thou destroyest the hope of man.
20 Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth;
Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.
21 His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not;
And they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.
22 [14]But his flesh upon him hath pain,
And his soul within him mourneth.

[1] Heb. *And he is like.* [2] Or, *withereth*
[3] Or, *Oh that a clean thing could come out of an unclean! not one* can
[4] Heb. *cease.* [5] Or, *have pleasure in* [6] Or, *lieth low*
[7] See Is 19[5]. [8] Heb. *are gone.* [9] Or, *the grave*
[10] Or, *will . . . shall come* [11] Or, *change*
[12] Or, *Thou shalt call, and I will &c.* [13] Heb. *fadeth away.*
[14] Or, *Only for himself his flesh hath pain, and for himself his soul mourneth*

Job feels that in pleading his cause he is placed at a great disadvantage through his ignorance of the sins of which he is counted guilty. He is prepared, indeed he importunately

desires, to hear God's indictment against him. His afflictions in themselves, though they prove to him that God is hiding His face and treating him as an enemy, throw no light upon the cause of God's anger. But, as God does not deign to answer any of his questions, he soon loses the proudly defiant tone of a blameless litigant, and ends his speech, which closes the first cycle of the Dialogues, with a dirge over man's swift passage from the trouble and labour of life to an everlasting sleep. In certain moods the sufferer, overwhelmed with grief and frenzied by the sense of injustice, has longed for death, with no desire for any after-life; but now, in a calmer and more reflective spirit, he laments that frail man is not even so well-off as some old tree which, cut down to the stump and carefully watered, puts forth fresh shoots, and is by and by covered again with foliage and laden with fruit. And yet, why should a second life be impossible for man? Why should he be less fortunate than a tree? For a while the speaker is fascinated by the idea. If God would hide him meantime from His own wrath in Sheol, and then, in an altered mood, recall him to the old happy fellowship with Himself on earth, how patiently would he wait, and how cheerfully respond at last! But it is only a day-dream, an alluring fancy from which Job turns back to the hard facts. God is now keeping jealous watch over his life, recording all his transgressions with the intention of taking vengeance; and, if mountains, rocks, stones, and the dust of the earth cannot resist the forces of the elements, God easily shatters the hope, by destroying the life, of man, so that the poor mortal, with aspect changed, is thrust down to the dark abode in which he knows nothing of the fortunes of his children in the upper world, while of his own former life no semblance remains but the nameless pain of his decaying body and the dull sorrow of his soul.

23 **Make me to know my transgression and my sin.** Assuming that all his afflictions are penal, Job feels that he ought to be told what are the offences of which he stands accused, and for which, indeed, he is already bearing the brunt of God's wrath. He expresses the desire, which cannot be called unreasonable, for an indictment (cf. 31^{35}). His moral sense protests against arbitrary proceedings, and prompts him to assert

that right to a fair trial which is the privilege of every free man. Surely there is justice in the supreme court of the universe; a Magna Charta which God Himself will not violate!

24, 25 **Wherefore hidest thou thy face?** Grievously disappointed that God still fails to appear, while He continues to display and evidently to nurse His wrath, Job uses figures which suggest that He is making a strangely ungenerous as well as an arbitrary use of His omnipotence, lowering Himself to harass a driven leaf, to pursue the dry stubble. Is there no divine magnanimity? This bitter thought brings another swift change of mood to the speaker, who for some time uses, not the lofty tones of a confident accuser, but the melancholy accents of an unjustly condemned and despairing prisoner. To his imagination, God appears like Browning's *Instans Tyrannus*, who says of his helpless victim:

> 'So I pinned him to earth with my weight
> And persistence of hate.'

26 **For thou writest bitter things against me.** 'Writest' has the force of 'ordainest,' Job never doubting that all the pains which he endures are prescribed for him by God. **the iniquities of my youth.** What the poet makes the hero say of his own moral character is singularly well balanced. While, on the one hand, Job stoutly maintains that he is 'perfect' or 'blameless,'—true-hearted and whole-hearted in the service of God,—on the other hand, he does not deny that he committed the sins and faults from which youth, passionate and inexperienced, is never wholly free (Ps 25^7). Of course, he refers to no gross breaches of the moral law.

27 **Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks.** Job figures himself as a poor prisoner, and God as his strict Guardian, who puts a block of wood (what the Greeks called a *ξύλον*) on his feet to impede his movements, while He sets a watch at every possible way of escape. **Thou drawest thee a line about the soles of my feet.** Duhm would strike out 'my feet' as a dittograph (see 27^a), and read, 'Thou cuttest a line about my roots,' Job comparing himself to a tree whose roots are cut to prevent them from spreading too far. This does not seem so natural.

28 **Though I am like a rotten thing.** The Heb. text reads,

'And he is like.' Budde and others regard the verse as a reader's marginal note on Job's next words (14[1]).

XIV. 1 The beginning of this chapter recalls that of ch. 7, only the theme is now the transitoriness rather than the misery of human life. As far as v.[13] Job speaks as a representative man—any woman's son—merging his own case in that of the race, giving lyric expression to the feelings of suffering, down-trodden humanity in general.

2 **He cometh forth like a flower**, which in its beauty, fragility, and evanescence is everywhere a natural image of human life, especially of life ending prematurely, **cut down** in its prime (Is 40[6], Ps 103[15], Ja 1[10. 11], 1 P 1[24]). 'Life's a short summer—man a flower. He dies—alas! how soon he dies!'[1] 'The flowers of the forest are a' wede away.' **He fleeth also as a shadow**: a symbol of the insubstantiality of human existence. 'Life's but a walking shadow.'[2] 'What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!'[3] 'And I myself the shadow of a dream.'[4]

3 **And bringest me into judgement.** Much better, **him** (LXX τοῦτον, such a one). Job is now dwelling on the common human lot, his experiences having drawn him into deeper sympathy with all his suffering brethren.

4 **Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?** If the verse is genuine, the point of the question would seem to be, that the universal uncleanness of man makes God's hostility to the individual difficult to explain. The answer, **Not one**, makes an unusually short line, and Duhm would read, 'No one is without sins,' ingeniously suggesting that the word for 'without sins' (מֵחַטָּאוֹת) has been accidentally omitted owing to its likeness to the previous word for 'out of an unclean' (מִטָּמֵא). Bickell, Beer, and other scholars regard the verse as the sigh of a reader, first expressed on the margin, and afterwards introduced into the text. It certainly disturbs the train of thought, which relates to the brevity of human life, not to the corruptness of human nature. V.[5], with its references to man's days, months, and limitations, recovers the thread.

6 God's suspicious scrutiny makes man so restless and

[1] Johnson, *Winter*. [2] *Macbeth*. [3] Burke. [4] Tennyson, *The Princess*.

afraid, that he is driven to pray God to **look away from him.** He cannot bear that frowning face, those terrible searching eyes. Contrast young Milton's resolve to live 'as ever in my great Taskmaster's eye.' **Till he accomplish, as an hireling, his day.** For 'accomplish' read **have pleasure in** (יִרְצֶה). There is a sad irony in the words, the 'enjoyment' which man gets out of his life being only like that which the poor hireling finds in **his day** of toil (cf. 7^2).

7–9 **For there is hope of a tree.** In the country east of the Jordan, and especially in the region round Damascus, many kinds of trees—vine, fig-tree, pomegranate, walnut, citron, ash, mulberry—are still renewed by the process which is here so vividly described.[1] Such an apparent miracle would naturally attract a poet's attention, and suggest to him images of spiritual things.

10–12 Here the denial of a second life is absolute. Man lies down not to rise again; he falls asleep not to wake till the heavens be no more, *i.e.* never. Job shares the ordinary Hebrew belief that this life is all, and his ignorance of immortality is one of the presuppositions of the drama. Faith in a future life would completely alter the data of the problem of suffering.

11 ***As* the waters fail.** This verse being nearly the same as Is 19^5, many critics regard it as a marginal quotation. The use of a second figure, less forcible and less artistically wrought out than the first (note 'the river decayeth') is improbable. ^{12a} is also to be excised as part of the interpolation, leaving the perfect distich $^{12b.\ c}$.

13 A strange doubt has been injected into Job's mind—a doubt of the power of death. His blank denial of an after-life is at once followed by a misgiving, which soon transmutes itself into a passionate longing for what he has denied.

> 'Just when we're safest, there's a sunset-touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell . . .
> And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
> As old and new at once as Nature's self,
> To rap and knock and enter in the soul.' [2]

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[1] Wetzstein in Delitzsch's *Job*, i. 245.

[2] Browning, *Bishop Blougram's Apology*.

Here it is a fancy from an old tree-stem, as good as dead, and yet, at the scent of water, shooting up again in green felicity. At this point Job ceases to speak as the representative of mankind in general, the problem being too absorbingly personal, and his prayer becomes an infinitely pathetic '**Remember me.**' And here he is guilty of another illogicality, which is yet the expression of a profound spiritual intuition. He wishes that God would hide him from His wrath, making Sheol a shelter for him till that wrath has spent itself, and then recall him to life. From God he appeals to the Over-God; from the God who reveals Himself by plagues and disasters to the God who is the Demand of his conscience and the Desire of his heart; from the God of earth to the God of heaven; from the God of wrath to the God of grace. [13c] and [14a] should form a distich, and [14b. c] another.

14 **If a man die, shall he live** *again*? The LXX, though it has not quite grasped the meaning, suggests a better rendering, 'If a man might die and live again,' etc. Instead of pausing for a moment to ask (as the ordinary reading makes him do) whether there is any truth in the fascinating idea of a future life, he follows breathlessly in the track of this idea, realising at once that, if true, it would transfigure his (and all men's) view of earthly existence. With such a belief, how patiently would he **wait**, like a sentinel at his post, all the days of his **warfare**,—that hard service, primarily military, to which life is again (see 7^{1}) compared,—for, in the light of such a vision, the sorrows of the present and the pains of death would alike totally change their aspect, becoming experiences which, however bitter, he would pass through with a good cheer, in the hope of a deliverance from Sheol and the beginning of a new life.

15 **Thou shouldest call, and I would answer thee.** The possible after-life is conceived as objectively beginning with a divine **call**—compare Tennyson's 'one clear call for me'—and a human response; while it subjectively emanates, in the last analysis, from a **desire** in the heart of God for a fellowship which He has found sweet and cannot forgo. It is deemed unnatural that His intercourse with men, once begun, should be interrupted, or at all events that, if interrupted, it should, from any cause on His side—lack of power or lack of will—fail to be renewed. From

the Christian point of view, divine friendship is not only lasting but everlasting; but the OT never does more than grope after this truth (see Ps 49^{15} 73^{23}), and it is Christ who first dares to unfold all the inner logic of God's communion with man (Mk 12^{27}). In the phrase **the work of thy hands**, Job again suggests how befitting it is that God should continue to care for the human being on whom He has lavished so much thought and skill (cf. 10^{3}).

16–22 As if awaking from a beautiful but empty dream, Job comes back to the hard actualities of life. Instead of that blissful, entrancing possibility which has for a moment gleamed upon his sight, what is his real expectation? From the dreary present, in which he is jealously watched by a stern and unforgiving God, he sees himself, bereft of hope, passing ere long through the gate of death to the darkness and silence of Sheol, where he will be alike unknowing and unknown.

16, 17 It is just possible (though scarcely probable) that these lines complete Job's musings on the happy after-life to which for a moment he imagines himself called. Making certain needful changes in the text, Budde translates thus: 'For then wouldst Thou (in kindness) number my steps, Thou wouldst not watch over my sin; Sealed up in a bag would be my transgression, And Thou wouldst palliate mine iniquity.'

18, 19 Job contemplates the dissolution of the most solid-seeming realities around him in nature, and then, as if he belonged to the same order of things, resigns himself to his fate, accepting the inevitable. **The mountain** crumbles (lit. fades away), **the rock** is shattered, **the stones** are water-worn, the surface of **the earth** is washed away by floods, and, with a terrible logical consistency, God completes the havoc by destroying the hope of man,—not the distinctive hope of an after-life, but that element of hope which is an essential part of His gift of life to every human being. The same sequence of ideas is found in Prospero's prediction:

> 'The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve. . . .
> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made of, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.'

19[c] This line is unmated, and Duhm proposes to couple with it [12a], which is superfluous in the present position. We should then read, 'So thou destroyest the hope of man (אֱנוֹשׁ), And man (אִישׁ) lieth down to rise no more.'

20 Whatever exceptional powers God confers upon man, He sooner or later attacks him and prevails against him, so that **he passeth.** This is the language of nature, euphemistically covering up the tragedy of death, and the same pathetic accents are heard everywhere. 'The One remains, the many change and pass.' 'We pass, the path that each man trod Is dim, or shall be dim, with weeds.' 'Tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe.' 'Alles rollt vorbei.' The passing-bell is never silent. But if Revelation consents to retain the word 'passeth,' she does so only on the condition that she shall be allowed to give it an entirely new content; for her teaching is that '*we have passed* (μεταβεβήκαμεν) out of death into life' (1 Jn 3[14]), so that at the last 'there is no death, what seems so is transition.' The 'Passing of Arthur,' is not a descent, dreaded by the ancients, into an underworld of darkness, but a going to meet the dawn.

21 **His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not.** Compare Ec 9[5], 'the dead know not any thing.' On this verse *Mark Rutherford* (p. 285) finely comments: 'He is shut out from all sympathy with the joys and the sorrows of the children whom he has so much loved. He lies cold and dead when they are exulting in love, in marriage, in well-deserved congratulations from their fellows. He is cold and dead when they are in complicated difficulty or distress from which he could save them.'

22 **But his flesh upon him hath pain.** Job is made to express the gloomy idea that even death does not give the body complete relief from pain, the flesh in some strange way *feeling* the fingers of decay do their work—a gruesome popular fancy which matches Job's melancholy mood. The marg. reads, 'Only for himself (no longer for others) his flesh hath pain.' At the same time, his soul leads a mournful existence, not to be called life, in Sheol (see note on 4[13f.]).

XV. 1–35.

THE FATE OF THE WICKED.

1 Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,
2 Should a wise man make answer with [1]vain knowledge,
And fill his belly with the east wind?
3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk,
Or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?
4 Yea, thou doest away with fear,
And [2]restrainest [3]devotion before God.
5 For [4]thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth,
And thou choosest the tongue of the crafty.
6 Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I;
Yea, thine own lips testify against thee.
7 Art thou the first man that was born?
Or wast thou brought forth before the hills?
8 [5]Hast thou heard the secret counsel of God?
And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?
9 What knowest thou, that we know not?
What understandest thou, which is not in us?
10 With us are both the grayheaded and the very aged men,
Much elder than thy father.
11 Are the consolations of God too small for thee,
[6]And the word *that dealeth* gently with thee?
12 Why doth thine heart carry thee away?
And why do thine eyes wink?
13 That thou turnest thy spirit against God,
And lettest *such* words go out of thy mouth.
14 What is man, that he should be clean?
And he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?
15 Behold, he putteth no trust in his holy ones;
Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.
16 How much less [7]one that is abominable and corrupt,
A man that drinketh iniquity like water!
17 I will shew thee, hear thou me;
And that which I have seen I will declare:
18 (Which wise men have told
From their fathers, and have not hid it;
19 Unto whom alone the land was given,
And no stranger passed among them:)
20 The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days,
[8]Even the number of years that are laid up for the oppressor.

21 A sound of terrors is in his ears;
In prosperity the spoiler shall come upon him:
22 He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness,
And he is waited for of the sword:
23 He wandereth abroad for bread, *saying*, Where is it?
He knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand:
24 Distress and anguish make him afraid;
They prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle:
25 Because he hath stretched out his hand against God,
And [9]behaveth himself proudly against the Almighty;
26 He runneth upon him with a *stiff* neck,
[10]With the thick bosses of his bucklers:
27 Because he hath covered his face with his fatness,
And made collops of fat on his flanks;
28 And he hath dwelt in [11]desolate cities,
In houses which no man [12]inhabited,
Which were ready to become heaps.
29 He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue,
Neither shall [13]their produce bend to the earth.
30 He shall not depart out of darkness;
The flame shall dry up his branches,
And by the breath of his mouth shall he go away.
31 Let him not trust in vanity, deceiving himself:
For vanity shall be his recompence.
32 It shall be [14]accomplished before his time,
And his branch shall not be green.
33 He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine,
And shall cast off his flower as the olive.
34 For the company of the godless shall be barren,
And fire shall consume the tents of bribery.
35 They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity,
And their belly prepareth deceit.

[1] Heb. *knowledge of wind.* [2] Heb. *diminishest.* [3] Or, *meditation*
[4] Or, *thy mouth teacheth thine iniquity*
[5] Or, *Dost thou hearken in the council*
[6] Or, *Or is there any secret thing with thee?*
[7] Or, *that which is*
[8] Or, *And years that are numbered are laid up &c.*
[9] Or, *biddeth defiance to* [10] Or, *Upon*
[11] Heb. *cut off.* [12] Or, *would inhabit*
[13] Or, *their possessions be extended on the earth*
[14] Or, *paid in full*

In the second round of the debate, Eliphaz, the oldest and most influential of the three friends, is again the opening speaker, from whom the others take their cue. If he is less courteous

and conciliatory than he was in his first speech, his change of attitude is easily accounted for, and to his own mind amply justified. He has been deeply mortified to hear his words of comfort, which seemed to him the very consolations of God, rejected with indignation and scorn; he has keenly resented the arrogant claim to a new wisdom superior to that of the ancients; and, above all, his ears have been shocked by a blasphemous attack upon the righteous government of God. He is therefore compelled to alter his view of his friend, and his mode of dealing with him. Whereas he first regarded him as an essentially pious and right-minded man, who was being chastised, not so much for any specific sins as for his participation in the universal human frailty and corruption, he now knows him, on incontrovertible evidence, to be a despiser of religion, a rebel against God. And, since it is evident that consolations and promises should not be wasted upon an obstinate sinner, nothing remains but to threaten him with the fate of the godless, in the hope that he may yet be affected with wholesome fear and brought to repentance. Eliphaz accordingly proceeds to prove that he can descant as effectively upon the terrors as upon the consolations of religion. After repeating and accentuating his doctrine of human depravity, he paints a lurid picture of a typical evil-doer, haunted in the midst of prosperity by the terrors of an evil conscience, and finally, with all his children and possessions, overwhelmed by the wrath of God.

2 Job having expressly claimed that he was no less wise than his friends (12^3 13^2), and virtually implied that he was wiser, Eliphaz, expanding a phrase of Bildad's (8^2), loftily asks if it is a wise man's part to defend himself with **vain knowledge**, lit. 'with knowledge of wind,' with words as empty and bitter as they are noisy and violent, and to **fill his belly with the east wind**. Ewald takes this second phrase to refer to 'speeches which come from the belly, the seat of unruly passion, not from the heart'; but it is more probable that Eliphaz, without making any physical or psychical distinction, thinks only of giving expression to his unmitigated scorn by characterising Job as a windbag or blusterer (a word connected with 'blow,' 'blast,' Ger. *blasen*). Sir Thomas More has the alliterative phrase 'bloweth and

blustereth out blasphemy'; and Carlyle constantly applies Eliphaz's words to all kinds of pretentious and empty oratory. Cf. Virgil's 'ventosa lingua' (*Aen.* xi. 390).

3 **Or with speeches wherewith he can do no good.** 'Eliphaz condemns Job because his talk can do no good. Always has this been urged against those who, with no thought of consequences, cannot but utter what is in them; and it is held to be especially pertinent against the man who, like Job, challenges the constitution under which he lives, and has "no remedy to propose."'[1]

4 **Yea, thou doest away with fear.** This is probably a charge of both subjective irreverence and objective irreligion, the word 'fear' being used in late Hebrew as practically equivalent to 'religion.' **And restrainest devotion.** Probably the meaning is not that Job's words and example tend to impair the devotion of others (Ewald), but that he himself fails to maintain that reverent stillness before God which is essential to true religion; he 'diminishes' it (as גָּרַע literally means) by violent and unseemly utterances. In thus accusing Job of irreverence, Eliphaz is only superficially right, and it is the purpose of the drama to exhibit a seeker after truth who never really ceases to be profoundly religious, however far he may drift from his old theological moorings, and however unconventional may be the language which his hard experiences sometimes wring from his lips.

5 **For thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth.** Reasoning from effect to cause, and concluding that all words are 'taught,' or prompted, by the good or bad spirit which dominates the inner life, Eliphaz asserts that Job's blasphemous utterances are inspired by the wickedness of his heart, that his evil genius or preceptor is the character he has made for himself. **And thou choosest the tongue of the crafty.** The speaker regards Job's assumption of innocence, his assault upon divine justice, and his repudiation of accepted dogmas as clever ruses to evade detection. Eliphaz makes no allowance, either for honest doubt, or for the possibility of self-deception, or for the bewilderment of a mind staggered by calamity and racked by bodily pain. Duhm plausibly suggests that the poet employs the word **crafty** as a

[1] *Mark Rutherford*, 285.

technical term. 'Was there,' he asks[1] 'a movement, perhaps a writing, which contrasted, in the manner of Eliphaz, divine wisdom with the cunning of the serpent (חָכְמָה with עָרְמָה), reverence (יִרְאָה) with sceptical criticism?'

6 **Thine own mouth condemneth thee.** Job has himself, as Eliphaz tells him with lofty severity, furnished evidence enough to incriminate him. However vehemently he may protest his innocence, his blasphemous complaints of divine injustice, coupled with his impatience and despair under affliction, make his guilt a certainty. The word for 'condemn' (Hiph. of root רָשַׁע) means lit. 'to make wicked.'

7, 8 **Hast thou heard the secret counsel of God?** or, 'Didst thou hearken in the council of God?' Eliphaz scorns the idea that a man may learn the ways of God, and unlearn the doctrinal errors of men, through the discipline of suffering. To discuss such an idea seems to him 'unprofitable talk' (v.[3]), solemn trifling with a great subject. He is convinced that divine wisdom can only be acquired through God's direct communication of truth to the men of His counsel, and, not for a moment supposing that Job has been the recipient of special revelations, he merely questions him ironically in order to expose his pretensions. Had he the privilege of being **the first man,** brought into being before the creation of the world, and endowed with supernatural wisdom? Did he habitually sit in the council of God, and **hearken** (impf. tense) to the exposition of all His plans? Probably 'the first man' is not Adam, but the primeval man of another mythology —not elsewhere alluded to in the OT—who was brought into being before the creation of the world, and endowed with all wisdom. Renan, Budde, and others find here a direct reference to the demiurgic Wisdom, who was 'brought forth before the hills' (Pr $8^{22ff.}$). To Duhm the parallelism suggests that the poet may not have written 'brought forth before the hills' (גְּבָעוֹת), but 'before the angels' (גְּבֹהִים, 'the high ones,' cf. Ec 5^{7}), a phrase which was changed because offence was taken at the notion of the angels being 'brought forth.' In 8^{a} the marg. makes the question run, not 'Didst thou hearken' (before the creation), but 'Dost thou hearken (now, as a seer or prophet)

[1] *Hiob*, p. 81.

in the council of God?' This reading has the approval of Duhm and Budde. **And dost thou restrain** (וְתִגְרַע) **wisdom to thyself?** This means monopolise it (*Oxf. Heb. Lex.*), or appropriate it (Del., Dill., Dav.), or absorb it (Ew.).

10 **With us are both the grayheaded and the very aged men.** If the irony of Eliphaz has for a moment invested Job with supernatural attributes, its real intention is to expose his conceit and reduce him to the level of ordinary humanity. That done, Eliphaz returns to seriousness, and challenges him to say what he knows that his friends do not know. So far from having the wisdom of primitive man, he has not even the experience of old age. One of the friends whose views he presumes to dispute is older than his father. Here Eliphaz, who speaks with a sense of offended dignity, apparently refers to himself. He has not profited by the question already put by Job, 'Are years wisdom?' (12^{12}). Evidently the poet himself smiles at the claims of age, and would agree with Wis $4^{8.9}$ 'For honourable old age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor is its measure given by number of years: but understanding is grey hairs unto men, and an unspotted life is ripe old age.'

11 **Are the consolations of God too small for thee?** Eliphaz is chagrined to find that his ministry of comfort has brought him no honour and gratitude. He has offered his patient nothing but the soothing doctrines which he believes to be the very consolations of God,—the comfortable words which the Most High would Himself use as the balm of wounded spirits,—and it seems to him incredible that they have been spurned. He does not realise that they have been rejected because Job cannot fail to perceive that his friends, regarding his afflictions as the judgments of God, take his real need to be repentance first and consolation afterwards.

12 **And why do thine eyes wink?** The word for wink (רָזַם) occurs only here, and may be a transposition of an Aramaic word (רְמַז) which also means 'to flash,' giving the good rendering, 'Why do thine eyes flash in wrath?' Budde thinks the text corrupt, and, noting that the parallelism requires a word expressive of pride rather than anger (which belongs to the next verse),

emends so as to read, 'Why are thine eyes so lofty?' (יְרוּמָה, cf. Pr 6^{17} 30^{13}).

13 **That thou turnest thy spirit against God.** Rather, **thy breath,** a contemptuous expression meaning 'thine angry breath.' If **lettest words go out of thy mouth** ('such' being an insertion) is correct, **words** (מִלִּין) has to be accentuated in reading so as to denote mere empty words. Duhm regards the phrase as meaningless, and suggests that we should read 'rebellion' (מְרִי).

14–16 Eliphaz feels bound to re-state, in still stronger language, the doctrine of human depravity which was once oracularly revealed to him ($4^{17ff.}$), for he is more convinced than ever that Job needs to hear it for his good. The increased forcibleness of the words, culminating almost in brutality, is an indication of the speaker's altered mood. Man is now described as abominable, corrupt, gulping down iniquity like water; and Job cannot fail to understand that this damnatory language is not merely general, but addressed to his own conscience.

15 **his holy ones:** His angels; see note on 5^{1}. **Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.** The parallelism with 'holy ones,' and the fact that man is the subject of comparison, suggest that Eliphaz is not thinking of the material heavens, but of their inhabitants—the angels, or the stars regarded as animated (cf. 25^{5} 38^{7}).

16 **one that is abominable and corrupt.** The first term (נִתְעָב) means morally 'abhorred' by God and man. The second (נֶאֱלָח) is found only here and in Ps 14^{3} (53^{3}), in both passages with a moral sense. Originally it was used (as it still is in Arabic) of 'turned' milk. **A man that drinketh iniquity like water!** that thirsts after sin, and finds delight in it. Budde takes this to mean that it has become as natural for man to do evil as it is to drink water; while Duhm thinks the point of comparison lies in the fact that one drinks water in deep gulps, stronger liquids being taken more cautiously. 'The idiom is very common in Arabic. It seems natural to the Oriental mind to conceive of many operations under the idea of *eating* and *drinking*, which we connect more directly with some other sense than that of taste, or else mention abstractly.'[1]

[1] Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 300.

17–35 Having rebuked Job's pride and impiety, Eliphaz, speaking in the oracular manner of a seer, proceeds to give a description, elaborate and appalling, of the fate of the wicked man. As he is perfectly at home in this theme, his eloquence becomes like the roll and swell of a great organ, ending in a resounding crash which typifies the doom of iniquity.

18, 19 **Which wise men have told From their fathers.** The Heb. text has the pause after 'told'—the natural place—and then proceeds, 'And they have not hid from their fathers,' which, of course, inverts the true order of events. The LXX gives the correct reading, 'And their fathers have not hid.' **And no stranger passed among them.** Eliphaz utters the words of this parenthesis in tones of profound regret. Divine wisdom —true religion—was the glory of **the land** in the happy days of old, the precious heritage which was handed on from sire to son, before the incursions of strangers began to taint the ancient purity of the race and awaken the impious spirit of doubt. Here it is evident that the poet has in view not patriarchal Edom, but post-exilic Judaea, where he heard many an Eliphaz utter the sad complaint that the mixture of peoples was deplorably corrupting the old simplicity of manners and doctrine.

20 **The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days.** The doctrine itself, in its terrible punitive aspect, is now hurled like a thunderbolt. Even in days of prosperity the sinner has dark inward forebodings of coming disaster, comparable to the pains of a travailing woman.

21 **A sound of terrors is in his ears.** Cf. the words of Richard III.:

> 'O Lord, methought what pain it was to drown!
> What dreadful noise of water in mine ears!'

22 The Heb. text of the first line gives a passable but somewhat complicated sense: the guilty man believes that when the darkness of disaster shall once overtake him, he will never again see the light. The LXX has an imperat.—'Let him not believe.' But the line is overloaded; and Duhm, striking out 'believeth not,' reads as in 30^{a}, which is a variant of this line, **He shall not depart out of darkness.** **And he is waited for.** The Heb. (צָפוּי, Qr. צְפִיָּה) means lit. 'spied out (and brought) to the

sword.' Most scholars read, with Ewald, **'treasured up for** (צָפוּן) **the sword.'**

23 The LXX reads **kite** (אַיָּה) instead of **Where is it?** (אַיֵּה); and this suggests to Siegfried the sense, 'He is given (נְתָן for נָדַד) for food to the kite,' and to Duhm, 'He is appointed' (נָעָד). 23^b is too long, and it is possible that either 'ready' or 'at his hand' should be cancelled. The LXX, however, connects 'the day of darkness,' which in the Heb. is the last word of 23^b, with 24^a. It then remains to manipulate either the word for 'at his hand' (בְּיָדוֹ) or that for 'is ready' (נָכוֹן). Changing the former, Wright reads, 'He knoweth that his doom (פִּידוֹ) is fixed'; while Duhm, changing the latter in accordance with the LXX (οἶδεν . . . ὅτι μένει εἰς πτῶμα), gets 'He knoweth that disaster (נֶכֶר) is at his side,' and Beer, 'that calamity' (אֵיד).

24 Read, 'The day of darkness maketh him afraid, Distress and anguish prevail against him.' The words 'as a king ready to the battle' make the second line too long, and afford no good image of distress prevailing against the wicked man. Duhm's suggestion, that they were originally a marginal comment on v.^{26}, is very plausible.

25–28 If Eliphaz is here painting a picture for Job's benefit, he lays his colours on somewhat recklessly. In v.^{26} the wicked man is a warrior making an assault upon God; in v.^{27} he is a brutish sensualist; and in v.^{28} he is so impious that he rebuilds waste cities which lie under a ban. Even to-day, ruins are avoided in the East as uncanny. It must not, of course, be supposed that the dramatist himself confounded superstition with piety. Duhm thinks that these four verses, descriptive not of the fate (which is the real theme), but of the behaviour, of the wicked man, are a later insertion, and suggests that the interpolator had in view no mere private individual, but some such prominent personage as Aristobulus or Alexander Jannaeus, who was the opponent of the zealots for the law.

29 From here onward through several verses the text is in great confusion. The LXX connects 28^c with 29^a, and suggests the emendation, 'What he has gotten, others shall take away,

Neither shall his substance continue.' Many scholars regard [29b] as hopelessly corrupt. The word translated 'their produce' (מִנְלָם) is otherwise unknown. The LXX has, 'He shall not cast a shadow (צֵל) on the earth.' Hitzig, followed by Budde, conjectures, 'Neither shall his ears of corn (מְלֵלִים) bend to the earth,' but regards the verse as an interpolation. Duhm abandons emendation as useless, thinking that several lines have been lost.

30 Striking out [30a] as a variant of [22a], we get a couplet in which the godless man is compared to a plant that is doomed to destruction. In [30b] read, 'The heat shall dry up his branches.' In [30c] the LXX has simply, 'And his flower shall fall.' Duhm suggests, 'And his fruit shall be whirled away by the wind.'

31 This verse, which interrupts the metaphor of the plant, is generally regarded as an interpolation. It may originally have stood as a marginal note beside v.[35].

32 In place of the unintelligible Heb. text, the LXX has, 'His stem shall be withered before its time.' In [32b] 'branch' means 'palm-branch.'

33 **He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine.** This contains a simile which is untrue to nature, for the more unripe grapes are the firmer is their hold. The word tr. 'shake off' (חָמַס) properly means to wrong, to treat violently, and the idea probably is, 'He shall fail to nourish, he shall kill' (*Oxf. Heb. Lex.*).

34 It is part of Eliphaz's creed that the households of the ungodly shall be **barren.** The perversion of justice by **bribery** has always been a crying wrong in the East.

35 This verse makes a very effective conclusion. In the Heb. text the first line consists of two exclamations, **To conceive mischief! and to bring forth trouble!** The end of Eliphaz's speech bends back to the beginning—the godless man fills his belly with the east wind . . . and his belly prepares deceit. The *Oxf. Heb. Lex.* suggests that **belly** is here the 'seat of intell. faculties (= Eng. *breast* or *bosom*)'; but Eliphaz's contempt is surely allied with a certain deliberate coarseness, which does not miss the fitting term. The word tr. 'deceit' (מִרְמָה), on which the speaker's voice comes to rest, usually denotes treachery, craftiness, the deception of others; but here it means the self-delusion of the man who is recklessly driving towards destruction.

XVI. 1–XVII. 16.

THE WITNESS IN HEAVEN.

1 Then Job answered and said,
2 I have heard many such things:
[1]Miserable comforters are ye all.
3 Shall [2]vain words have an end?
Or what provoketh thee that thou answerest?
4 I also could speak as ye do;
If your soul were in my soul's stead,
I could join words together against you,
And shake mine head at you.
5 *But* I would strengthen you with my mouth,
And the solace of my lips should assuage *your grief.*
6 Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged:
And though I forbear, [3]what am I eased?
7 But now he hath made me weary:
Thou hast made desolate all my company.
8 And thou hast [4]laid fast hold on me, *which* is a witness *against me*:
And my leanness riseth up against me, it testifieth to my face.
9 He hath torn me in his wrath, and [5]persecuted me;
He hath gnashed upon me with his teeth:
Mine adversary sharpeneth his eyes upon me.
10 They have gaped upon me with their mouth;
They have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully:
They gather themselves together against me.
11 God delivereth me to the ungodly,
And casteth me into the hands of the wicked.
12 I was at ease, and he brake me asunder;
Yea, he hath taken me by the neck, and dashed me to pieces:
He hath also set me up for his mark.
13 His [6]archers compass me round about,
He cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare;
He poureth out my gall upon the ground.
14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach;
He runneth upon me like a [7]giant.
15 I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin,
And have [8]laid my horn in the dust.

16 My face is [9]foul with weeping,
And on my eyelids is the shadow of death;
17 Although there is no violence in mine hands,
And my prayer is pure.
18 O earth, cover not thou my blood,
And let my cry [10]have no *resting* place.
19 Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven,
And he that voucheth for me is on high.
20 My friends scorn me:
But mine eye poureth out tears unto God;
21 [11]That he would maintain the right of a man with God,
And of a son of man with his neighbour!
22 For when a few years are come,
I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

XVII. 1 My spirit is consumed, my days are extinct,
The grave is *ready* for me.
2 Surely there are [12]mockers with me,
And mine eye abideth in their provocation.
3 Give now a pledge, be surety for me with thyself;
Who is there that will strike hands with me?
4 For thou hast hid their heart from understanding:
Therefore shalt thou not exalt *them*.
5 He that denounceth his friends for a [13]prey,
Even the eyes of his children shall fail.
6 He hath made me also a byword of the people;
And I am become [14]an open abhorring.
7 Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow,
And all my members are as a shadow.
8 Upright men shall be astonied at this,
And the innocent shall stir up himself against the godless.
9 Yet shall the righteous hold on his way,
And he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.
10 But return ye, all of you, and come now:
[15]And I shall not find a wise man among you.
11 My days are past, my purposes are broken off,
Even the [16]thoughts of my heart.
12 They change the night into day:
The light, *say they*, is near [17]unto the darkness.
13 [18]If I look for [19]Sheol as mine house;
If I have spread my couch in the darkness;
14 If I have said to [20]corruption, Thou art my father;
To the worm, *Thou art* my mother, and my sister;

15 Where then is my hope?
And as for my hope, who shall see it?
16 It shall go down to the bars of [19]Sheol,
When once there is rest in the dust.

[1] Or, *Wearisome*
[2] Heb. *words of wind.*
[3] Heb. *what departeth from me?*
[4] Or, *shrivelled me up*
[5] Or, *hated*
[6] Or, *arrows* Or, *mighty ones*
[7] Or, *mighty man*
[8] Or, *defiled*
[9] Or, *red*
[10] Or, *have no more place*
[11] Or, *That one might plead for a man with God, as a son of man* pleadeth *for his neighbour*
[12] Heb. *mockery.*
[13] Heb. *portion.*
[14] Or, *one in whose face they spit*
[15] Or, *For I find not*
[16] Heb. *possessions.*
[17] Or, *because of*
[18] Or, *If I hope, Sheol is mine house; I have spread . . . I have said . . . and where now is my hope?*
[19] Or, *the grave*
[20] Or, *the pit*

Listening with weary patience to Eliphaz's grandiloquent sermon on the doom of the impenitent sinner, Job is compelled to realise with a new vividness that God and men have alike turned against him and conspired to hold him guilty. To the hostility of his friends, which at first wounded him so deeply, he has grown in a manner accustomed, and he can shield himself from it with the armour of scorn, characterising them as tormenting comforters and their violent speeches as windy platitudes. But to the enmity of God he can never be inured, although, with his innate love of facts, he steadfastly confronts it, as if with the determination to realise it in all its bitterness. His imagination creates a series of pictures of the malign activity of an angry God, which are almost unique in their tremendous realism. Behind all his sufferings he sees, as the Author of them, an implacable Foe, with terrible looks, piercing darts, and shattering missiles, persecuting him in bloodthirsty fury. With such an Antagonist it is hopless to contend, and nothing would seem to be left to him but to sink into an abyss of despair and await the end of his miseries. But it is his salvation that he never quite despairs. He is clothed with sackcloth and his face is foul with passionate weeping, but the spirit within him is unsubdued. Arousing himself to assert once more that he goes to his death with clean hands, appealing to the earth not to cover his innocent blood, and struggling heroically against his sense of desertion by God and man, he

suddenly sees, beyond all the miseries of earth, the face of a Friend, the Witness of his innocence, the Voucher for his righteousness, and forthwith knows, and will henceforward hold as an inalienable personal conviction, that deep in the heart of God there is hidden a love which, in spite of all appearances, can never abandon the righteous. To this God he therefore prays, not asking Him to prolong his life and restore his prosperity,—for he assumes that his end is near, and does not seek the reversal of natural laws,—but begging that after his death the foul stigma which now attaches to his name may be removed, and his honour vindicated. He asks something more—that even now, while he still lives, a pledge may be given to the God who has been angry with him that his innocence is soon to be established. But who can give such a pledge to God? Who but God Himself? And thus Job is brought back to that apparent division in God, which is really an antinomy in his conception of God. From the God of wrath he appeals to the God of grace; which means in reality, though he does not yet fully grasp the truth, that he appeals from the phantom God of his imagination to the God of faith who is also the God of fact. Farther than that he does not venture to go, for farther he cannot yet see; and, as if once more to emphasise his conviction that his vindication is not to be expected in his lifetime, he wistfully reverts to the delusive promises held out to him by his friends, who have tried to comfort him with the idea of the nearness of light, even while he has seen the darkness gathering around him. Having thus faced and familiarised himself with the fact of death, he still forces himself to say once more that his 'hope' is Sheol and the grave.

2 Job is heartily weary of the religious platitudes which speaker after speaker has been inflicting upon him. Eliphaz has uttered nothing new, for **many such things** have been in the previous discourses. His self-love has been wounded because his words of comfort—'the consolations of God' (15^{11})—have not been gratefully accepted; but need he wonder? 'Comforters who begin by softly stroking their beloved friend, as if to soothe his pain, and then vigorously rub the salt into the gaping wounds of the groaning victim, are miserable comforters.'[1] Perversely

[1] Dillon, p. 74.

postulating the sufferer's guilt, ignoring his solemn protestations of innocence, and therefore administering irrelevant and unmerited reproof, they are all of them 'comforters of trouble' (מְנַחֲמֵי עָמָל), who only add to the sufferer's distress a new sense of solitude and wretchedness. 'Wearisome' (marg.) is scarcely strong enough; Cheyne has 'tormenting comforters.'

3 **Shall vain words have an end?** The exhaustion of Job's patience must not be explained on any low grounds. 'The man's impatience with his friends may almost be construed as a note of saintliness; it was his haste to escape out of their unveracities into the truth of God.'[1]

4 **I also could speak as ye do.** Job has an increasing sense of the heartlessness of such performances as his friends' speeches. Since they began to address him, he has not been conscious of a tone, a touch, a look of genuine sympathy. They are acting a rôle which he assures them he too could easily play. If the relation of persons were reversed—if they were the sufferers and he the comforter—he could be as coldly critical and as loftily wise; he could shake his head with as portentous gravity, and administer as gracious lip-comfort. In his lonely sorrow, Job has made the startling, unwelcome discovery that the creed of good men may dry up all the springs of their natural affection, insomuch that they would be far more kind if they had no religion at all.

5 Omit '*But.*' The AV and RV are probably wrong in making Job here abandon his rôle and say he would offer words of real comfort; for he imagines himself proceeding in the same ironical vein, dispensing cheap consolation—the solace of his lips—to his sorrowful friends. In ^{5b} the absence of an object to the verb is awkward. The LXX inserts a negative, and reads, 'And my lip-compassion I would not spare'; a reading adopted by Bickell, Siegfried, and others.

6 Thinking that this verse is also ironical, Duhm would translate, 'If I spake, my compassion (lit. pain) would not be spared. And if I ceased, what would I be lessened?' Whether he spake or were silent, he would be equally able to demonstrate his sympathy. But it is very doubtful if pain (כְּאֵב, cf. 2^{13}) can

[1] A. M. Fairbairn, p. 166 f.

mean the pain of sympathy. Job rather makes a pause after v.[5], and then says he is at a loss whether to go on or not, since speech and silence equally fail to draw from his hearers any responsive words of sympathy and help.

7 This verse does not run smoothly, and the change from the third to the second pers. throws suspicion on the text. Budde would substitute 'thou' for 'now' (אַתָּה for עַתָּה) and read, 'Thou alone hast made me weary.' The reference to Job's 'company' is very strange. Taking it as a scribe's slip for 'evil' (רָעָתִי for עֲדָתִי), and making the first word of v.[8] the last of v.[7], Bickell (followed by Duhm) makes the whole verse run (partly as in LXX), 'Now he hath wearied me, astonied me, All my evil layeth fast hold on me.'

8 Here Bickell reads, 'It (my evil, or trouble) is a witness, and riseth up against me, My leanness testifieth to my face.' Job's misery and emaciation prove, to himself as well as others, that he is counted guilty, and neither his vehement denials nor his laboured arguments are able to invalidate the evidence. The poet gets such ideas expressed dramatically, because he wishes to prevent them from being ever again uttered in real life.

9 **He hath torn me in his wrath.** As in other passages where the sense of divine hostility is acute, Job alludes to his Adversary only as **He**, which might be called his pronoun of alienation. Here he figures the Author of his sufferings as an angry beast standing over his captured prey with gnashing teeth and glaring eyes. Instead of 'persecuted' the LXX reads 'cast me down' (*κατέβαλέ με*), which suits the metaphor better. The third line probably belongs to what follows.

10, 11 **They have gaped upon me.** As the sudden change from the sing. to the plur. is awkward, Wright and others would remove the difficulty by putting v.[11] before v.[10]. In [11a] the word translated **ungodly** is lit. 'boy' (עֲוִיל), to which it is necessary to give the sense of 'knavish'; but as this is hard upon the boy, and the plur. of the same word is found in 19^{18} 22^{11} without any suggestion of knavish tricks (being there tr. 'children'), it is probable that the original text contained a similar word (עָוֶל) meaning 'unjust.' These verses (along with [9c]) are regarded by many scholars as an insertion. Repre-

senting the speaker, in unmetaphorical language, as assailed not by one great Adversary, but by a host of foes, they interrupt Job's figurative description of God's attack on himself. They closely resemble some of the 'I' Psalms, in which collective Israel, speaking as an individual, complains of the cruelty of the heathen. The LXX omits [10a], which is also the first line of Ps 22[13].

12 **I was at ease, and he brake me asunder.** This verse completes the figure begun in v.[9], the wild beast which has seized his prey taking him now by the neck and dashing him in pieces. [12c], which should go with [13a] to form a couplet, introduces a new figure, in which God is represented as making Job a mark for His arrows, cleaving his vitals, and pouring out his gall upon the ground. The RV is wrong in supposing that God sends a company of **archers** or 'mighty men' (marg.) against Job. He comes Himself into the field as the sole Antagonist, and it is His **arrows**, not His 'archers,' that fly around Job. The first marginal reading is without doubt right.

14 God is now figured as storming a fortress, making **breach after breach** in the walls, rushing like **a giant** (גִּבּוֹר, usually tr. 'mighty man') upon His victim. The Hebrew words:

יִפְרְצֵנִי פֶרֶץ עַל פְּנֵי־פָרֶץ
יָרֻץ עָלַי כַּגִּבּוֹר

have a crashing sound, the onomatopœia, which is to some extent perceptible throughout the whole of this description, here becoming apparent.

15 At this point there is a brief pause, in which imagination pictures the gigantic Foe continuing His cruel sport, and then Job resumes in a quieter strain, drawing attention to the pitiful condition to which his afflictions have reduced him. He has sewed sackcloth on his skin (cf. 2 K 6[30]), which is, of course, a pregnant expression, meaning that, having sewed a garment of haircloth, he wears it next his skin. Instead of using the ordinary word for skin, he scornfully says 'my hide' (נִלְדִּי, LXX *βύρσα*). When he adds, **And have laid my horn in the dust,** he gives poetical expression to his sense of profound humiliation, doubtless with memories of the time when he proudly 'exalted his

horn,' a phrase of very frequent occurrence in the Psalms ($75^{4.5}$ $89^{17.24}$ 92^{10} 112^{9} etc.), denoting increase of power, dignity, and prestige.

16 **My face is foul with weeping**: rather, 'inflamed.' The verb so translated, which is found only here, is the Arab. *ḥamar*, to be red, whence the Moorish Alhambra, the 'red' building, takes its name. Involuntary weeping is one of the symptoms of leprosy; but Job's other afflictions, and the interpretation which he put upon them, would alone be enough to account for his passionate tears. Another effect of his disease and his weeping is the increasing dimness of his sight, which suggests to his shuddering fancy the approach of **the shadow of death** (see note on 3^{5}).

17 **Although there is no violence in my hands, And my prayer is pure.** After those words of unrelieved gloom, nothing seems left to Job but silent despair and patient waiting for death. But over this figure of lonely dejection, brooding on a world of sorrow, there still shines, as in Watts's picture, one star of hope. He knows that whatever accusations are made, whatever suspicions are harboured, against him, he is innocent, both in his moral life among men and in his hidden communion with God—his hands being free from violence, his prayer pure—and, unless the world is utterly irrational, innocence has its right, its claim, its hope. 'It is precisely here that the immeasurable power of the good conscience and the invincible strength of innocence are most splendidly and surprisingly displayed. If everything on earth is lost and all present things are destroyed, if even the ancient God of the outward world appears to fail and must be given up, nevertheless innocence, with its clear conscience, can neither give up itself nor the eternal, necessary God.'[1] This verse at once recalls Is 53^{9}; and, as the likeness between the two passages can scarcely be a coincidence, the question is raised which of them was written first. See Introd. p. 19.

18 **O earth, cover not thou my blood.** Job's terrible pictures of the hostility of God, who gnashes upon him with His teeth, pierces him with His arrows, rushes upon him like a giant, and his description of the pitiful condition, so near to

[1] Ewald, 173.

death, to which he has been reduced, all combined with his consciousness of integrity, awake in him a frenzied sense of outraged justice, and wring from him a passionate entreaty that the voice of his innocent blood may be heard. It was an ancient belief that, if a good man's life was taken, his blood cried for vengeance as long as it remained uncovered (Gn 4^{10}, Ez $24^{7.8}$, Is 26^{21}). Job has no thought of literal bloodshed, but he foresees an untimely, wrongful death, and uses a daring figure of speech to emphasise his vehement demand for redress. He charges the earth to give the cry of his blood—what he also calls **my cry**—no resting-place, that it may be compelled to wander like an unhappy spirit through heaven and earth.

19 **Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven.** If Job had pursued the thought of the shedding and avenging of innocent blood, he would have continued, 'Let it (the cry of my blood) come to the ear of my Avenger.' But the wild justice of vengeance is here out of place, and Job's mind turns to the quieter thoughts of faithful witness-bearing and righteous advocacy. **Even now,** when all seems lost, when he almost feels the icy hand of death laid upon him, he knows that his Witness and Voucher is in heaven. He conceives the strange and paradoxical idea that, while the God who manifests Himself on earth is against him, the God who reigns **on high** is on his side, witnessing and ready to vouch for his innocence. With this passage one may compare a stanza of Tennyson's *Despair*, noting, however, that, while the idea of vengeance upon God occurs in both poems, the greater poet leaves it undeveloped.

'Ah yet—I have had some glimmer, at times, in my gloomiest woe,
Of a God behind all—after all—the great God for aught that I know;
But the God of Love and of Hell together—they cannot be thought,
If there be such a God, may the Great God curse him and bring him to nought!'

20 The first line is too short, and the text has evidently suffered. The lit. trans. is, **My friends are my scorners,** but the word for scorners (מְלִיצַי) usually means 'interpreters.' Budde would restore the line to the normal length by reading, 'Scorners of their friend are my friends.' Duhm suggests 'So would my friends for me be found.' The LXX has 'My prayer would

come unto God,' which gives a good parallelism. **Mine eye poureth out tears unto God.** These are different tears from those alluded to in v.[16], where Job shows a face foul or inflamed with weeping. There, hot and scalding tears of passionate resentment under a fierce sense of divine injustice; here, gracious tears that accompany prayer, and are themselves almost prayers, poured out to a God who is after all surely friendly to an innocent son of man and will maintain his right.

20^{b}, 21^{a} **tears unto God; That he would maintain the right of a man with God.** How strangely different are the thoughts of God in these two successive clauses of a sentence! Job asks God, his Witness, to maintain his cause against his Antagonist, who is God. If God be against him, who can be for him but God? Such is the logical contradiction to which he is brought by the collision of his experience, interpreted by an antiquated theology, with his moral sense, which is really creating, though he is as yet but dimly conscious of the fact, a new theology. **a man . . . a son of man** (גֶּבֶר . . . בֶּן־אָדָם). These are synonymous terms (cf. Ps 8^{4}), and by using them here Job makes himself, alike in his sorrows and his hopes, a representative of the human race. **with his neighbour.** Does this refer to one of Job's friends (say Eliphaz), or, as the parallelism would rather suggest, to his great Antagonist? The latter is Duhm's view; and, in a poem full of daring thoughts, such an audacity is not impossible.

22 **For when a few years are come.** As Job looks to God for the vindication of his honour after death, we should rather expect him to say, 'For my death is at hand.' That is what he clearly implies in 17^{1}; but here, according to the Heb. text, he contemplates the possibility of still living some years. Lit. translated, the words run, 'For years of number are come'; and Hoffmann, transposing the two nouns, proposes to read, 'For the term of my years is come.' Bickell makes another ingenious suggestion. As the word for years (שָׁנוֹת) may also mean 'women,' and the word for 'number' (מִסְפָּר) is almost the same as that for 'mourning' (מִסְפֵּד), it is possible to read, 'For the mourning women shall come.' There does not seem to be any real objection to this interesting reading, though it is true that

the OT uses other names for the professional mourning-women.[1]

XVII. 1 **The grave is** *ready* **for me.** The Heb. has **the graves,** and the plur. indicates that the poet does not always remember that Job is a man of rank, who would naturally be buried in a sepulchre (or 'house') of his own, but sometimes thinks of him as an ordinary citizen like himself, whose lasting resting-place will be among the graves of the common people.

2 **Surely there are mockers with me.** The text of this verse (as of several others in the chapter) is probably corrupt, and the meaning can only be conjectured. The Heb. does not read 'mockers,' but 'mockery'; and the reference can scarcely be to the delusive hopes of recovery which Job's friends at first held out to him, for such hopes are suppressed in the second cycle of the Dialogues. Duhm, who translates 2b 'And mine eye abideth on bitter things,' supposes that the mockery and the bitterness refer to the cruel lot which God has appointed for Job.

3 Read, **Deposit now a pledge for me with thyself,** avoiding an awkward break in the middle of the line by reading the second verb, 'be surety for me' (עָרְבֵנִי), as a noun, 'my pledge,' or 'a pledge for me' (עֵרְבֹנִי). The first verb (שִׂימָה) thus gets its natural meaning 'lay down' instead of 'give now a pledge.' Job's desire is that some one who believes in his innocence should give a pledge to God for him—a guarantee that means will be used to get his righteousness established. But he naturally asks who will **strike hands** with him, *i.e.* undertake suretyship, since no man can give a pledge to God, or such a pledge as would satisfy Him. Job is thus driven to ask God to deposit a pledge for him with Himself, God being regarded as both Judge and Surety. The thought of a pledge implies that the trial is not to take place at once. Before it comes off Job will have died; but he confidently expects that after his death there will be a revulsion of feeling in the divine mind, and then he will obtain the fair trial which he has sought in vain during his lifetime. It is against the day of his posthumous trial that he asks God to be his surety with God. 'It is impossible for

[1] Nowack, *Heb. Arch.* i. 196.

him to attribute wrath and grace, as he experiences them both, to the same God; he must apportion them to two Gods. Only the anticipation that the wrathful God will ultimately be overcome by the gracious God, makes it possible for him, in spite of his division between God and God, to hold fast his religion.'[1]

4 This unmetrical and obscure verse is omitted by the LXX. Who are alluded to as lacking **understanding**? and whom will God **not exalt**? A bitter reference on Job's part to his friends at such a moment is unlikely. Bickell and Duhm delete the verse. If it is retained, the meaning, strangely expressed, would seem to be that such men are unfit to deposit a pledge on Job's behalf.

5 **He that denounceth his friends for a prey**: *i.e.* he that resorts to law in order to distrain their goods, or reduce themselves to bond-service, or otherwise injure them. It is extremely difficult to see the relevancy of this proverb. Duhm regards it as a marginal quotation. Siegfried thinks the text is hopelessly corrupt.

6 **He hath made me a byword.** The 'He' of alienation refers to the God of earth, not to the Witness in heaven. This verse contains the first reference to an adverse public opinion regarding Job. The sudden reversal of his fortunes, and the inference drawn therefrom as to his character, are common talk, as he well knows, among **the people**, lit. the peoples, or tribes. The once honoured name of Job has become a word of contumely and scorn. The false judgment of men is a heavy part, though not the heaviest, of the burden which God has given him to bear. On this verse, Cheyne[2] remarks: 'Here it is difficult not to see that the circumstances of the poet's age are reflected in his words. The whole Jewish nation became "a byword of the peoples" during the exile, and the mutual sympathy of its members was continually taxed.' **And I am become an open abhorring.** The word for 'abhorring' is *tōpheth* (תֹּפֶת), which cannot here mean the gruesome place of Moloch sacrifices, but rather (from another root) 'a spitting in the face.' Beer prefers to read 'a portent' (מֹפֵת), and Budde suggests 'a fool' (פֹּתֶה).

[1] Smend, 500.

[2] *Job and Solomon*, p. 32.

7 **Mine eye also is dim**, cf. 16^{16}. The word translated **my members** (יִצְרִי, from יָצַר, to form) is found only here. The traditional explanation is 'members of my body'; but perhaps we should give the word a more general sense, 'And every form is (to my dim eyes) as a shadow.'

8 **Upright men shall be astonied at this**: struck dumb as they contemplate Job's sufferings and his lonely misery. In 8^{b} Job appears to say that the innocent (נָקִי, any innocent sufferer like himself) shall become excited against the godless who are enjoying prosperity. But he is more likely to have said, 'And the godless shall stir himself up against the innocent'; which is the reading adopted by Merx and several other scholars. The apparently immoral government of the world is one of the root-causes of infidelity.

9 **Yet shall the righteous hold on his way.** This verse, so noble as a detached expression of the persistence of righteousness and the strength of innocence, is extremely difficult to fit into the context. Delitzsch compares it to 'a rocket which shoots above the tragic darkness of the book, lighting it up suddenly, although only for a short time'; and Davidson thinks 'the passage is perhaps the most surprising and lofty in the book.' In its present position it can only mean that even if God takes the side, or is proved to be already on the side, of injustice, yet the righteous man will persevere in his own way, and the innocent be confirmed in his integrity. But the idea that Virtue is sufficient unto herself seems foreign to Hebrew modes of thought. No Jew ever said 'Amen' to the stoical sentiment, 'Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni'; and no Jew ever imagined that ethics do not require the divine will as a basis, or that moral zeal can survive the creed by which it has hitherto been inspired, unless it can create for itself a yet higher theism. Some scholars are therefore inclined to think that vv. $^{8.\ 9.\ 10a}$ have somehow strayed from Bildad's speech, where they may have originally stood (as Duhm suggests) after 18^{3}. In such a connection v.^{9} would only mean that, however severely Job may judge his friends, they, righteous men, will never falter in the path they have chosen for themselves.

10^{a} This line is too long in the Heb. text, and probably the word for 'all of you,' or, properly, 'all of them' (כֻּלָּם), should be

struck out as a mere dittograph of the preceding word (אִלָּם, 'would that'). Duhm changes the verb into the sing., and joins [10a] with 18[4a] to form a couplet, 'But return and come now, Thou that tearest thyself in thine anger.' If this suggestion is adopted, [10b] has to be deleted.

11 Here, too, the text is uncertain. As the margin indicates, the word translated 'thoughts' (מוֹרָשֵׁי) means 'possessions.' Wright follows the LXX, which has 'cords' (ἄρθρα = מֵיתָרֵי). Making some other textual changes, Budde reads, 'My days pass on to death, The cords of my heart are broken'; and Duhm, 'My days pass away without hope, They destroy the wishes of my heart.'

12 Siegfried leaves a blank in the second line, regarding it as hopelessly corrupt. Duhm requires some drastic changes in order to educe the reading, 'The night I make into day, And light is darkness before me.'

13–15 The general sense of these verses is clear. As Job has not only reconciled himself to the facts of death, but even learned to use endearing terms regarding it, why should his friends still attempt to buoy him up with delusive hopes? It is better to read, 'If I hope, Sheol is my house; I have spread my couch in the darkness; I have said to the pit, Thou art my mother, And to the worm, Thou art my sister; And where now is my hope? And my good, who shall see it?' **Corruption**, being fem., should be addressed not as 'father,' but as 'mother.' 'Father' was probably introduced by some unintelligent reader who thought that 'father' must be mentioned beside 'mother' and 'sister.' 'My hope' in [15a], after 'I hope' in [13a], is unlikely, and the LXX's 'my good' (τὰ ἀγαθά μου, from a reading טוֹבָתִי instead of תִּקְוָתִי) is probably right.

16 The Heb. text yields no good sense. Instead of **the bars** the LXX reads 'with me,' preceded by the interrog. particle (הַעִמָּדִי for בַּדֵּי), which gives a meaning approved by many scholars, 'Shall they (my hope and my good) go down with me to Sheol, Or shall we descend together to the dust?'

XVIII. 1–21.

THE DOOM OF THE WICKED.

1 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
2 How long will ye lay snares for words?
Consider, and afterwards we will speak.
3 Wherefore are we counted as beasts,
And are become unclean in your sight?
4 Thou that tearest thyself in thine anger,
Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?
Or shall the rock be removed out of its place?
5 Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out,
And the [1]spark of his fire shall not shine.
6 The light shall be dark in his tent,
And his lamp [2]above him shall be put out.
7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened,
And his own counsel shall cast him down.
8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet,
And he walketh upon the toils.
9 A gin shall take *him* by the heel,
And a snare shall lay hold on him.
10 A noose is hid for him in the ground,
And a trap for him in the way.
11 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side,
And shall chase him at his heels.
12 His strength shall be hungerbitten,
And calamity shall be ready [3]for his halting.
13 It shall devour the [4]members of his body,
Yea, the firstborn of death shall devour his members.
14 He shall be rooted out of his tent wherein he trusteth;
And [5]he shall be brought to the king of terrors.
15 [6]There shall dwell in his tent that which is none of his:
Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.
16 His roots shall be dried up beneath,
And above shall his branch [7]be cut off.
17 His remembrance shall perish from the earth,
And he shall have no name in the street.
18 He shall be driven from light into darkness,
And chased out of the world.
19 He shall have neither son nor son's son among his people,
Nor any remaining where he sojourned.

20 [8]They that come after shall be astonied at his day,
As they that went before [9]were affrighted.
21 Surely such are the dwellings of the unrighteous,
And this is the place of him that knoweth not God.

[1] Or, *flame* [2] Or, *beside* [3] Or, *at his side*
[4] Heb. *bars of his skin.* [5] Heb. *it shall* (or *thou shalt*) *bring him.*
[6] Or, *It shall dwell in his tent, that it be no more his*, or, *because it is none of his* [7] Or, *wither*
[8] Or, *They that dwell in the west are . . . as they that dwell in the east are &c.* [9] Heb. *laid hold on horror.*

While Job, as a spiritual pioneer, strikes out for himself a new path in every successive speech, and is rewarded with wonderful vistas of hitherto unexplored and unimagined truth, his friends keep to the beaten, monotonous tracks, which lead them through no land of far distances. Limited in the second cycle of dialogues to the one tremendous theme of retribution, they muster their energies to do it justice; and on the present occasion Bildad the traditionalist is as brilliant as he is truculent. Wounded in his self-love, and returning scorn with scorn, he asks if Job takes his friends for beasts that their intelligence is so disparaged; he mocks the sufferer's agonised despair as insensate rage; and satirises his bewildered complaint of the moral disorder of the world as an egoist's readiness to see the earth emptied and the rocks removed sooner than admit that he is in the wrong. After this attempt at originality, Bildad falls back on the ordinary routine of retributive doctrine; and yet he becomes strangely tense and impassioned as, in a succession of short, sharp, perfectly balanced sentences, with the air of a prophet foreseeing, and almost of a judge fixing, the doom of 'the man who knows not God,' he tells of snares waylaying him, terrors surrounding him, disease wasting him, death seizing him, his house destroyed, his race extinguished, his name covered with undying infamy. And if Bildad does not dramatically end by thundering at the blasphemer before him, 'Thou art the man,' it is impossible to mistake the drift of his speech or misread the thought of his heart.

2 **How long will ye lay snares for words?** It is strange that in this and the next verse Bildad should address Job in the second pers. plur.—'will ye lay,' 'consider ye,' 'in your sight.' Ewald regards it as an expression of contempt on his part, as if he

were determined not to accost Job individually, but only him and the like of him—the company of the godless. The LXX, however, has the second pers. sing., 'wilt thou,' etc., and it is followed by most scholars. In v.[4] the address to Job himself is pointed enough—'thou,' 'thyself,' 'thine,' 'thee.' If the trans. of [2a] is correct, Job is accused of hunting for strange and far-fetched ideas when he should be satisfied with common orthodox doctrine. The word for snares (קְנִצִי, where the Stat. Constr. is very curious) is known only in Arabic, and the old Versions read **end** (קֵץ). Duhm thinks that we must abide by this; but in order to make sense we have to shorten the line—in any case overloaded in Heb.—by omitting 'How long,' which was probably introduced, after the analogy of 19[2], when the line had become corrupt. We then read the peremptory command, **Make an end of words!** a fitting introduction to a very haughty and overbearing speech. In [2b] **afterwards** is meaningless, and it is not found in the LXX, which reads, 'Have done that **we** (emphatic) may speak.' The adverb 'afterwards' (אַחַר) is evidently a mistake for 'we' (אֲנַחְנוּ).

3 Job is indignantly asked if he takes his friends for **beasts** (בְּהֵמָה, a collective sing., LXX τετράποδα, quadrupeds), inferior to men, that he so despises their intelligence. The meaning of the verb in [3b] is somewhat uncertain. While Duhm adheres to the reading, 'Are we become unclean in your sight?' Budde derives the word from an Aram. root meaning 'stupid.' But the LXX reading is best, 'Have we become dumb (σεσιωπήκαμεν) in your sight?' Wise men do not like to be treated as dumb, driven cattle.

4 Here a line is missing, and Duhm completes the first couplet by transposing the first line of 17[10] to this place and reading, 'But return and come now, Thou that tearest,' etc. Whereas Job has accused God of tearing him in His wrath (16[9]), Bildad retorts that it is Job who is tearing himself in his impotent rage against God. Perhaps the speaker has also in mind the contents of the previous verse, and means to say, 'You treat us as beasts; but who rages like a wild beast, we or you?'

[4b. c] **Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?** Bildad satirises

Job as a man who will not accept the constitution of the universe,—who would sooner see the earth desolated and the rocks removed than bow to the will of Heaven. The Arabs have the proverbs, 'The world will not come to an end for his sake,' and 'The world does not exist for one man.' Even masterful spirits like Canute have to acknowledge their limitations. As Job's foolish quarrel with the order of the world, which is the will of Omnipotence, figures itself to Bildad's mind, it very much resembles a famous modern instance. 'The Atlantic,' says Sydney Smith, 'was roused; Mrs. Partington's spirit was up; but I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic beat Mrs. Partington. She was excellent at a slop or puddle, but should never have meddled with a tempest.'

5, 6 **Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out.** 'Yea' should be **Yet**. After all that sceptics may say, the old doctrine is still true. The fate of the ungodly is now to be depicted by a series of metaphors. While the cheerful fire burning on the hearth and the bright lamp suspended from the roof of the tent are symbols of the prosperity and happiness of the righteous, the waning fire and the dying lamp betoken the lot of the wicked. The Arab in misfortune still says, 'Fate has put out my lamp.'

7 **The steps of his strength shall be straitened.** 'Straitened' (or shortened) steps are the opposite of 'enlarged' (or lengthened) steps (Pr 4^{12}, Ps 18^{36}). The latter indicate the free and confident movements of the strong and prosperous,—the 'steps of his strength,' his manly, vigorous, fearless stride,—while the former suggest the timid, embarrassed gait and action of the man who has failed and lost nerve.

8–10 In these three verses, Bildad uses all the terms he can think of—net, toils, gin, snare, noose, trap—to indicate that the world is full of hidden dangers for the unwary feet of the sinner, who is, in addition, ever weaving a network of perils for himself: 'The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands' (Ps 9^{16}).

11 **Terrors shall make him afraid on every side.** Compare Shakespeare's words:

> 'Shadows to-night
> Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
> Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers.'

It is a question whether **terrors** (בַּלָּהוֹת) denote abstract, impersonal objects of fear; Duhm thinks that in Palestine, as elsewhere, there may well have been a belief in shadowy avenging spirits, which are perhaps referred to here.

12 **His strength shall be hungerbitten.** This is good enough English, but there are two objections to it: the parallelism with the next line is against it, and the word rendered 'hungerbitten' (רָעֵב) really means 'hungry.' Many scholars, therefore, follow the LXX in reading 'misery' or 'disaster' instead of 'his strength' (אֵיד or אָוֶן for אֹנוֹ), and translating, 'Misery shall be hungry (ravenous) for him.' This exactly suits [12b], 'And calamity shall be ready for his halting.' Instead of 'for his halting' the marg. has 'at his side,' the two nouns (צֶלַע, a rib or side, and צֶלַע, halting, stumbling) yielding the same form (צַלְעִי) when the pronoun is added. But the former expression can be paralleled (Ps 35^{15}, Jer 20^{10}), while there is no evidence that the latter is a Heb. idiom.

13 The interpretation of **the firstborn of death** is disputed. Ewald takes it to mean 'the man who before all others belongs to death and deserves it' (cf. 'a son of death'), and translates, 'He devoureth his members, he the firstborn of death,' *i.e.* the doomed man is at last driven to such madness of rage that, like a famished vagabond, he devours his own arm (cf. Is 9^{20}). Few accept this rendering, and some suggest that the phrase means the worm of corruption. But what Bildad most probably has in view is the most terrible of diseases, leprosy, which is personified (like death in v.[14]), and said to devour the members of the ungodly man. Bildad's lack of delicacy in his allusions amounts to ruthlessness. In [13a] 'the members of his body' is lit. 'the bars of his skin,' which gives no meaning. Duhm cancels the line as a mere variant of [13b]; and this obliges him to sacrifice also [14a], leaving the striking couplet, 'The firstborn of death shall devour his members, And he shall be brought to the king of terrors.' But it is perhaps better, with Wright and Beer, to make a slight change in the text of [13a] (בַּדֵּי, 'bars,' into בְּדֶוֶי, 'with disease'), and read, 'His skin is devoured by disease.'

14 **He shall be rooted out of his tent wherein he trusteth.**

The lit. trans. is 'out of his tent, his confidence'; but the Heb. is very questionable, and Duhm strikes the line out. Bickell omits 'from his tent' as a gloss, and translates, 'He shall be dragged out from his stronghold.' **The king of terrors** is Death, who reigns in the underworld. In Ps 49[14] he is figured as a shepherd, who keeps his flock in Sheol. Virgil (*Geo.* iv. 469) speaks of 'the shades of the dead and their awful king' (*Manesque adiit regemque tremendum*).

15 **There shall dwell in his tent that which is not his.** The words rendered 'that which is not his' (מִבְּלִי־לוֹ) are quite impossible Hebrew. Duhm makes a slight change, and gets the dubious reading, 'Incurable disease (lit. that which does not get up, get better, בְּלִיַּעַל) shall dwell in his tent.' Beer suggests 'Lilith (the night-demon) shall dwell in his tent,' a very clever emendation, as Budde admits, only he thinks that the ghost ought to have company, as in Is 34[14]. Siegfried uses asterisks to indicate that guesses are here unavailing. **Brimstone shall be scattered.** It was the custom to spread salt over places which had come under a ban (Jg 9[45]); and brimstone, suggestive of the cities of the plain, may have been used to symbolise a deeper curse.

16 **His roots . . . his branch.** A root and branch destruction is proverbial (cf. Am 2[9]). For 'be cut off' read 'wither,' which affords a better parallel to 'be dried up.'

17 **His remembrance shall perish from the earth.** For 'earth' it is better to read 'land'; and 'street' should be 'the open country,' 'the fields'—lit. that which is outside (חוּץ) enclosed or fenced cities. The word for **remembrance** (זֵכֶר) is sometimes abstract, the memory of a dead person, and sometimes concrete, that by which he is remembered, his memorial. If the verse means that the wicked shall be absolutely forgotten in his own country, the ordinary trans. of v.[20] must be revised, unless we are to suppose that the poet lets Bildad, in the rush of his eloquence, there contradict himself. But perhaps it is only the visible and tangible memorial of the wicked man that is said to perish, while yet the evil that he does lives after him. Contrast the everlasting remembrance which is the reward of the righteous (Ps 112[6]).

18 **He shall be driven.** Lit. 'They (*i.e.* men) shall drive him. . . . And chase him out of the world.' The Heb. has the alternative 'He (*i.e.* God) shall drive him,' etc. This was probably the original reading, and it is easy to understand how the poet's bold anthropomorphism gave offence to some of his readers.

19 **He shall have neither son nor son's son among his people.** The ungodly man is threatened with the doom which was so dreaded by the Semites—the absence of posterity. Probably the fear was rooted in ancestor-worship. If a family perished, a cult also died.[1] **where he sojourned:** lit. in his sojournings (בְּמְגוּרָיו). The phrase may be explained (with the LXX) as meaning in his home or earthly dwelling-place, life itself being regarded as a sojourn. More probably it refers to the places (away from his home) where he was in the habit of sojourning and enjoying hospitality.

20 **They that come after shall be astonied at his day.** The wicked man's **day** is the day of his downfall, regarded as a judgment (cf. Ps 37^{13}). But how can those who come after him be astonied at his day, if his remembrance has perished (v.[17])? And if that difficulty be got over (see above), how can they that went before shudder at the judgment which falls on him, unless (as Budde suggests) it is when he comes to join them in Sheol (cf. Is $14^{9.10}$). The difficulties are removed if we translate, 'They that dwell in the west are astonied at his day, And they that dwell in the east are filled with horror.'

21 **Surely such are the dwellings of the unrighteous.** The closing words are intended for Bildad's principal auditor. They mean: You may refuse to believe in the fate of the unrighteous as it is here depicted; but these are the facts, take them or leave them.

[1] See the writer's art. 'Family,' in Hastings' *ERE*.

XIX. 1–29.

THE VISION OF GOD.

1 Then Job answered and said,
2 How long will ye vex my soul,
And break me in pieces with words?
3 These ten times have ye reproached me:
Ye are not ashamed that ye deal hardly with me.
4 And be it indeed that I have erred,
Mine error remaineth with myself.
5 [1]If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me,
And plead against me my reproach:
6 Know now that God hath [2]subverted me *in my cause*,
And hath compassed me with his net.
7 Behold, I [3]cry out of wrong, but I am not heard:
I cry for help, but there is no judgement.
8 He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass,
And hath set darkness in my paths.
9 He hath stripped me of my glory,
And taken the crown from my head.
10 He hath broken me down on every side, and I am gone:
And mine hope hath he plucked up like a tree.
11 He hath also kindled his wrath against me,
And he counteth me unto him as *one of* his adversaries.
12 His troops come on together, and cast up their way against me,
And encamp round about my tent.
13 He hath put my brethren far from me,
And mine acquaintance are wholly estranged from me.
14 My kinsfolk have failed,
And my familiar friends have forgotten me.
15 They that [4]dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger:
I am an alien in their sight.
16 I call unto my servant, and he giveth me no answer,
Though I intreat him with my mouth.
17 My breath is strange to my wife,
And [5]my supplication to the children [6]of my *mother's* womb.
18 Even young children despise me;
If I arise, they speak against me.

19 All [7]my inward friends abhor me:
And they whom I loved are turned against me.
20 My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh,
And I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.
21 Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends;
For the hand of God hath touched me.
22 Why do ye persecute me as God,
And are not satisfied with my flesh?
23 Oh that my words were now written!
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
24 That with an iron pen and lead
They were graven in the rock for ever!
25 [8]But I know that my [9]redeemer liveth,
And that he shall stand up at the last upon the [10]earth:
26 [11]And after my skin hath been thus destroyed,
Yet [12]from my flesh shall I see God:
27 Whom I shall see [13]for myself,
And mine eyes shall behold, and not [14]another.
My reins are consumed within me.
28 If ye say, How we will persecute him!
[15]Seeing that the root of the matter is found in [16]me;
29 Be ye afraid of the sword:
For [17]wrath *bringeth* the punishments of the sword,
That ye may know there is a judgement.

[1] Or, *Will ye indeed . . . reproach?* [2] Or, *overthrown me*
[3] Or, *cry out, Violence!* [4] Or, *sojourn*
[5] Or, *I make supplication* Or, *I am loathsome*
[6] Or, *of my body* [7] Heb. *the men of my council.*
[8] Or, *For* [9] Or, *vindicator* Heb. *goel.* [10] Heb. *dust.*
[11] Or, *And after my skin hath been destroyed, this* shall be, *even from &c.*
Or, *And* though *after my skin this* body *be destroyed, yet from &c.*
[12] Or, *without* [13] Or, *on my side* [14] Or, as *a stranger*
[15] Or, *And that* [16] Many ancient authorities read, *him.*
[17] Or, *wrathful are*

Bildad's ruthless speech has the effect of raising Job's mental suffering to the point of anguish, for it leaves him haunted with the feeling that in God's wide universe he has not a single friend. In the first part of a chapter of enthralling interest he depicts his tragic isolation. His would-be comforters have all but crushed him beneath the weight of their reproaches. God has denied him justice, stripped him of his glory, relentlessly persecuted him, and wounded him unto death. His brethren, his kinsfolk, his familiar friends, his servants, his wife, and even little children—all whom he has loved—have turned against

him. But under the pressure of these intolerable thoughts his mind is so far from sinking into the lethargy of despair, that it is aroused to the utmost possible activity, and achieves its noblest triumphs. The crisis of his spiritual history has come. Some way of escape from his misery, some light in the darkness, some truth to live by, he must find, or perish. Aghast at the thought of God's persistent hostility, he clutches for a moment at the forlorn hope that his friends may after all be moved to pity him in his extremity, and, forgetting all his indignation at their past cruelty, he humbles himself to supplicate their compassion for one who is smitten by the hand of God. But he sees no pity in the faces of men who have learned to persecute him like God. He reads there the unjust and unalterable verdict of his contemporaries, and in a revulsion from it he suddenly anticipates and eagerly hails the juster judgment of the future, when men shall have larger minds and kinder hearts. Could he but leave an indelible record of his innocence for all coming generations to read, his honour would yet be retrieved. But what is the hope of posthumous fame, even if he could be sure of it, to the man who is now stricken and afflicted, whom nothing can console but the friendship of God? It is in this extremity that his faith performs its greatest miracle, forging for him a creed which is in a sense the creation of his own spirit, the emanation of his own character, but at the same time a revelation from the heart of God. He believes that he is about to die, meeting, to all appearance, a sinner's doom, but he knows in his own conscience that he will die innocent; and at the thought of his innocence there is a swift and mighty resurgence of his faith in the Over-God—the true God—who is his Witness and his Voucher (16¹⁹), a faith which now mounts into the full assurance that after his death God will publicly appear among men as his Vindicator, and that he will have the rapture of being recalled to hear his innocence proclaimed and to see the face of his Redeemer. At the thought of such a consummation he faints as if his reins were consumed within him.

2 **break me in pieces with words.** The verb (דְּכָא) is used frequently in the book, and always in a metaphorical sense—'to crush the spirit.' Here it refers to the crushing effect of un-

merited rebukes and cruel insinuations. In a good sense the 'crushed ones' are the contrite, the penitent (Is 57^{15}, cf. Ps 50^{17}). All the time that Job's friends are trying to make him contrite, he feels that, while they are missing their mark, they are not failing to 'break him in pieces.'

3 **These ten times have ye reproached me.** 'Ten times' is not to be taken literally, but as a round number meaning 'often.' The person who used the expression would lift his hands with a gesture of impatience, displaying ten fingers. 'Thou hast changed my wages ten times,' said Jacob to Laban (Gn 31^{7}; cf. Nu 14^{22}). The word for 'deal hardly' (הָכַר) occurs only here, and the meaning has to be guessed from an Arab. root.

4 **And be it indeed that I have erred.** Job is not confessing that he has erred, but only making the supposition for the sake of argument. **Mine error remaineth with me.** The interpretation of the Heb. words is uncertain. They may mean, My error is my own concern, not yours; or, I keep it to myself, and you cannot know anything about it; or, It would remain with me, and I should be conscious of it (which I am not): or, It may harm others, it cannot harm you. The similarity between this verse and 7^{20} commends the last explanation; but perhaps it is best (with Duhm) to make the sentence a question, 'Is error to remain with me?' *i.e.* have you the right to regard me as a sinner, and to seek the cause of my misfortunes in my guilt?

5 Here, too, there may be a question, 'Will ye indeed magnify yourselves against me?'

6 **Know now that God.** The order of the words in Heb. indicates that the divine name God (Eloah) is to be emphasised. In 8^{3} Eliphaz asks in horror, 'Doth God pervert judgement?' and here Job affirms, Yes, **God,** and no other, **hath perverted my right;** His injustice, not my sin, is the cause of my afflictions. (Job stops short of saying that God needs to be forgiven, or of offering, with Omar Khayyám, to share with Him the responsibility, 'Man's forgiveness give, and take.') His language is audacious (contrast Paul's indignant 'Is God unrighteous?' Ro 3^{5}), but on the old theory of retribution it was only the logical conclusion from the given premises.

7 'I cry out of wrong' is ambiguous. Better, **I cry out,**

Violence! as in Jer 20[8] (RV). The speaker is like a wayfarer set upon by brigands in some lonely place where no human ear can hear his despairing cry.

9 **my glory . . . my crown.** These are poetical terms, which are not to be too carefully defined. They vaguely but impressively denote all that Job valued in his relations with men —his rank, wealth, and honour—and especially in his relation to God—his standing as a righteous man.

11, 12 **His troops come on together.** Job figures himself as shut up in a fortress, against which his enemies—God's armies—cast up their way, *i.e.* raise a rampart on which they advance to the assault.

13–19 When Job has exhausted his military metaphors he describes, in language of the utmost directness and simplicity, without the use of a single figure, the divine hostility making havoc of all human friendships and natural affections. Here his words become singularly pathetic.

13 The LXX has **My brethren are gone far from me**, and the parallelism favours this reading. His **brethren** are his brothers in the strict sense of the word (cf. Ps 69[9]). The words for **mine acquaintance** (יְדָעַי) in [13b], and **my familiar friends** (מְיֻדָּעַי) in [14b], are from the same root, the former meaning 'those who know me intimately' and the latter 'those intimately known by me'; both, therefore, denote bosom friends. [14a] being too short and [15a] much too long, a readjustment is necessary. Changing the word for 'familiar friends' into the very similar verb for 'from knowing me' (מֵהֵדַּעַי), Duhm gets the excellent reading, 'My kinsfolk have ceased to know me, And my guests have forgotten me. My maids count me for a stranger, I am an alien in their sight.'

16 **Though I entreat him with my mouth.** Better, 'I must entreat,' or 'I have to entreat.' In former days a word, a look, a clap of the hands brought his servant instantly before him, to receive orders which would be obeyed to the letter; but now his humiliation is so complete that he has to resort to supplication.

17 **My breath is strange to my wife.** 'Strange' may be right, this being the ordinary meaning of the word (זָרָה); but here we should perhaps read 'offensive,' from a different root

connected with the Arab. word for 'abhor' (*Oxf. Heb. Lex.*). In 17^b neither the AV ('I entreated') nor the RV (**my supplication**) can be correct. The verb (חַנֹּתִי) is probably connected with an Arab. word to 'smell badly,' and this is what the parallelism demands. The marg. reads, 'And I am loathsome to the children of my *mother's* womb.' Duhm suggests that the original text had a noun for 'my ill odour' (צַחֲנָתִי), which occurs in Jl 2^{20}. **the children of my *mother's* womb** is, as Budde says, a *crux interpretum*. 'Mother's' is an insertion. That the word for 'womb' might be used of the father is proved by Ps 132^{11}, where the words are addressed to David, 'Of the fruit of thy body (womb) will I set upon thy throne' (cf. Mic 6^7). Job's whole phrase might conceivably mean 'the children of my concubines,' or 'my grandchildren'; but no reference is made elsewhere to concubines, and ch. 1 apparently implies that Job's sons and daughters were unmarried.[1] The RV makes Job speak of the children of the same womb as himself, his full brothers—*fratres uterini*. Duhm cuts the knot by giving the simple and natural rendering 'the children of my body,' with the remark that the poet did not trouble himself about the details of the story. W. R. Smith (*Kinship*, 38) argues that the word for 'womb' (בֶּטֶן) originally meant a tribe constituted by mother kinship, and that 'sons of my womb' denotes 'my clan.'

18 **Even young children despise me.** They naturally follow the example of their elders. They despise the man whom princes once honoured (29^9), for he is now a leper. When he rises from his dustheap, and moves painfully along, the gamins greet him with lightly spoken but deeply wounding words. To them his tragedy is a comedy. **Even** (גַּם) this indignity he is not spared.

19 **All my inward friends abhor me:** lit. the men of my council (מְתֵי סוֹדִי). A striking parallel occurs in Ps $55^{14.15}$, where a familiar friend, with whom the singer took sweet counsel (סוֹד), turns against him. Cf. also Ps 41^9. **And they whom I loved are turned against me.** In this lyric of blighted affections the hardest word to utter—'I loved'—is reserved to the last. The natural reward of a love so tender and true is a responsive love that overflows, instead of drying up, when the lover be-

[1] Blake in his Third Illustration assumes that the sons were married.

came a sufferer. The Book of Job was written against a theology which bred suspicion, soured the milk of human kindness, alienated bosom friends, and covered with infamy those who should have been crowned with honour and glory.

20 **My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh.** Here both lines are difficult. In the first, several scholars (guided by the LXX) think that the order should be inverted, 'My skin cleaveth unto my bone'; and Duhm strikes out 'and to my flesh' as superfluous. Bickell at first transposed 'flesh' from [20a] to [20b], and read in the second line, 'And I am escaped with my flesh in my teeth (cf. 13[14]), but afterwards made an emendation which yields a less satisfying result (though Duhm accepts it), 'And my teeth are gone.' The proverbial expression—in reality quite meaningless—'I am escaped with the skin of my teeth,' is based upon a corrupt text.

21 **Have pity upon me, have pity upon me.** The repetition of this cry indicates the depth of the speaker's distress. 'Men cannot live in the dislike and contempt of their fellows. They may steel their hearts against it for a time; if it be undeserved, resentment may for a time nerve them to bear it. But, sooner or later, it quite breaks them down, and even the most steadfast spirit quails under it. Job himself quails and faints under it.'[1] Appealing to the most human of feelings, he begs his friends to pity him on the ground that the hand of God has smitten him; but this is the very reason why they dare not respond to his appeal. They cannot change their indignation and scorn into sympathy without acknowledging his innocence, which would involve the abandonment of their creed, the admission into their minds of a new thought of God. Their friend, not their faith, has to be sacrificed.

22 **Why do ye persecute me as God?** The whole tragedy of the book is packed into these extraordinary words. Job's complaint of his friends is that they are too Godlike. What higher ideal can men have than the imitation of God? And yet their conduct may be most inhuman just when it seems to them most divine. Cf. Jesus' words in Jn 16[2] 'Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.' **And are not satisfied with my flesh?** To eat one's

[1] Cox, 237.

flesh was in Heb., as it still is in Arab., an expression for the use of slander, which is figured as a voracious beast preying upon the reputation of its victim. To Job's bodily sufferings his friends have added a still sharper pang by taunting him with the fact that God has forsaken him, and no misery, however profound, no appeal, however passionate, can make them relent. 'These Pharisaic muscles will not move. The rigidity of that religious decorum no human feeling shall break. Secure as they are in their principles and their piety, their countenance shows but austere reprobation of their wicked friend.'[1]

23 **Oh that my words were now written!** In despair of the present and its unalterable opinions, Job's spirit darts into the future that stretches before him with its unknown possibilities. Wistfully, not unhopefully, he lets his imagination dwell on the idea that time, history, the wisdom of later ages, the widening thoughts of mankind in new eras, may reverse the sentence which has gone forth against him. Job dead may get a justice which Job living has been denied. But how shall he present his evidence before the tribunal of posterity? God and man having conspired to condemn him, nothing remains in his favour but his own word, and he will soon be unable to speak it. This train of thought leads naturally to the passionate, but apparently unavailing, desire that his self-defence might be indelibly recorded for all future generations to read. Yet how splendidly his idea has been realised! His singular fancy of a testimony **in the rocks** could not be gratified, but he has his *apologia*—his *monumentum aere perennius* —**in a book** which is the masterpiece of Hebrew poetic genius.

24 **with an iron pen and lead.** It is a question whether one or two processes are here described. Writing with an iron stylus on leaden tablets—the *laminae plumbi*, *tabulae plumbeae* of the classics—and hewing inscriptions on rocks were familiar modes of recording events; and it is generally thought that the two are here combined, molten lead being run into the graven characters to give them greater clearness and permanence. This is the view of Dillmann and Duhm (following Rashi); while Budde, who regards the supposed practice as unproved and improbable, alters the text into 'with an iron pen in lead,' taking the rock-inscription to be a distinct and still more effective testimony.

[1] Davidson, *Theol. of OT*, 486.

25 **But I know that my redeemer liveth.** The appeal to posterity is dismissed by the appellant himself, not only as to all appearance impossible, but as inadequate even if it could be successfully prosecuted. Job's feeling might now be expressed in the words, 'Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?' (Is 2^{22}). And from this point the procession of his ideas becomes ever more astonishing. In a passionate desire to escape from a tragic and hopeless present, his mind makes a series of lightning-like flights of faith, glancing hither and thither through space and time, rising from earth to heaven, descending beyond the tomb and returning, and finally rending the veil of flesh, that he may stand in imagination, as he shall one day in reality, face to face with God, satisfied not with this or that attribute—wisdom, justice, or even love—but with a beatific vision in which all attributes are forgotten. The word 'Vindicator' is the nearest equivalent to Gōēl (גֹּאֵל), though 'Redeemer' may quite well be used, provided it is defined as a man's Deliverer, not from sin, but from unmerited wrong—the Redeemer of one's honour. In the language of men, the Goel[1] was the nearest blood-relation, on whom civil law imposed the duty of redeeming the property or person of his kinsman, and criminal law that of avenging his kinsman's blood if it was unjustly shed. The term is very often applied by the Second Isaiah to Jahweh as the Deliverer of Israel from exile. When Job calls God his Vindicator, it is not a deed of violence (though see 16^{18}) that he expects Him to avenge, but a stain on his honour that he desires Him to remove. He uses the expression 'my Redeemer **liveth**' in contrast with his own present condition. He must soon die, but his Vindicator will live on after him, active in his behalf. **And that he shall stand up at the last.** The word for 'at the last' (אַחֲרוֹן) means properly 'one coming after me,' 'my successor.' That the word denotes 'one who comes after me and defends my rights,' as if it were a synonym of Vindicator (as Ewald thought), is less likely. **upon the earth:** or 'on the dust,' or, still more definitely, 'on my grave.' The first sense is paralleled in 41^{33}, and the last in 7^{21} 17^{16}. Probably the middle rendering, **on the**

[1] Corresponding to the Arabic *wali* or protector; *Koran*, ii. 258 f.

dust, is best. Where Job's dust shall have mingled with kindred dust, God will stand to vindicate him.

26 **And after my skin hath been thus destroyed, Yet from my flesh shall I see God.** Alternative renderings are given in the margin, and their variety indicates in some measure the difficulty of the Hebrew. The lit. trans. of 26^{a} is, 'And after my skin, they have destroyed, this.' 'After my skin' probably means 'after the loss of my skin'; 'which' is apparently understood before 'they have destroyed,' and, as 'they' is indefinite, the sense is, 'which has been destroyed'; so that the whole runs, 'And after the loss of my skin, which has been destroyed.' **This** may be related to 'skin,' Job saying with a gesture 'this my skin'; or it may point forward, 'this shall happen.' The expression **from my flesh** is ambiguous. Job may mean either 'looking from my flesh,' *i.e.* in it, or 'away from my flesh,' *i.e.* as a disembodied spirit. The latter is probably the meaning. If there is a logical progress, a gradual evolution of ideas, in the drama, what Job expects is not only a posthumous vindication, but his own recall to hear it and to see his Vindicator. In $14^{14ff.}$ he seems emphatically to deny the possibility of a life after death, yet he is evidently fascinated by the idea. In $16^{18ff.}$ he expresses his faith in a Witness and Voucher who, after his death, will maintain his right. And now he expresses the conviction that not only the claims of ideal justice, but the human heart's deepest longing will be satisfied by the summoning of the injured dead back to life to be present at his own vindication. Further than this Job does not go. 'Of an eternal life after death he says nothing. Restoration to life signifies for him no more than the experience of justification, which is denied him on this side the grave, but which appears to him the goal of *his* faith.'[1] After his death he shall awake again to full consciousness, and shall see God —with whom be the rest!

27 **Whom I shall see.** The word for 'see' (חָזָה) is the one commonly used of ecstatic visions. Job indicates by a variety of expressions—**I** (אֲנִי, emphatic), **for myself, not another**—his intense satisfaction in the thought that he personally shall see

[1] Smend, 499.

God. This is the everlasting individualism of faith—'*My* flesh and *my* heart cry out for the living God' (Ps 84[2]). 'Whom I shall see **for myself**' (לִי) may mean either 'Whom I myself shall see,' or 'Whom I shall see on my side,' maintaining my cause. Budde and Duhm both prefer the latter interpretation. Instead of 'not another' the margin has 'not as a stranger' (לֹא־זָר), the meaning of which would be, no longer estranged and hostile, but a Friend. The vision of God being the highest attainment which can be conceived, Job is overcome by the anticipation of the hour of bliss, and exclaims, 'My reins are consumed within me!' It is evident that the writer of Job had deeply pondered the mysteries of death and Sheol, with the result that 'we have here a new doctrine of the soul. The soul is no longer cut off from all communion with God on death and shorn of all its powers, even of existence, as Job and his contemporaries had been taught to conceive it, but is regarded as still capable of the highest activities, though without the body.'[1]

28, 29 The text of the last lines (of which [29c] is probably a gloss) is rather uncertain, and Duhm goes the length of saying that one would willingly do without them. It is somewhat difficult to reconcile one's mind to the idea that, immediately after swooning at the anticipation of seeing God, Job should think and speak of Him as threatening to take vengeance on his persecutors. If he conceives God as bearing the sword to punish men therewith for their opinions, or even for their calumnies (the only kind of persecution mentioned in the drama), has he not himself the heart of a persecutor? But if the passage is theologically unsatisfying, it is perhaps psychologically right. The poet does not intend to exhibit his hero as superhumanly perfect; and, after all, Job has as yet only *imagined* the vision of God. When he actually sees God (42[5]), it is remarkable that, instead of having any thoughts, least of all vindictive thoughts, of others, he has only abhorrent thoughts of himself. And then he prays for his friends.

28 **the root of the matter is found in me.** The LXX reads 'in him' instead of 'in me.' If Job uses the words 'Seeing that

[1] R. H. Charles, *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, 71.

the root of the matter is found in me,' he is maintaining his own integrity; but if the friends say, 'And the root of the matter is found in him,' they mean that the cause of Job's afflictions is in himself. The second interpretation is probably right.

29 The text of this verse is very doubtful, and 'the sword' in two successive lines can scarcely be correct. The LXX has 'Beware of falsehood, For wrath will come upon the lawless.' Guided by this version, Duhm suggests, 'For wrath will destroy the reprobate.' In ^{29c} the Hebrew for **that there is a judgement** is very strange. Budde, guided by the Targum, changes it into 'that there is a judge.' This is possible, though the word for judge (דַּיָּן) is extremely rare. Ewald, Wright, and others propose to read, 'That ye may learn to know the Almighty,' *i.e.* Shaddai (שַׁדַּי instead of שֵׁדִין). Metrically superfluous, the line is probably a marginal note which found its way into the text.

XX. 1–29.

THE PORTION OF THE WICKED.

1 Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,
2 Therefore do my thoughts give answer to me,
[1]Even by reason of my haste that is in me.
3 I have heard the reproof which putteth me to shame,
[2]And the spirit of my understanding answereth me.
4 Knowest thou *not* this of old time,
Since man was placed upon earth,
5 That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
And the joy of the godless but for a moment?
6 Though his excellency mount up to the heavens,
And his head reach unto the clouds;
7 Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung:
They which have seen him shall say, Where is he?
8 He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found:
Yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.
9 The eye which saw him shall see him no more;
Neither shall his place any more behold him.
10 [3]His children shall seek the favour of the poor,
And his hands shall give back his wealth.

11 His bones are full of his youth,
But it shall lie down with him in the dust.
12 Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth,
Though he hide it under his tongue;
13 Though he spare it, and will not let it go,
But keep it still within his mouth;
14 Yet his meat in his bowels is turned,
It is the gall of asps within him.
15 He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again:
God shall cast them out of his belly.
16 He shall suck the poison of asps:
The viper's tongue shall slay him.
17 He shall not look upon the rivers,
The flowing streams of honey and butter.
18 That which he laboured for shall he restore, and shall not swallow it down;
According to the substance [4]that he hath gotten, he shall not rejoice.
19 For he hath oppressed and forsaken the poor;
He hath violently taken away an house, [5]and he shall not build it up.
20 Because he knew no quietness [6]within him,
He shall not save aught of that wherein he delighteth.
21 There was nothing left that he devoured not;
Therefore his prosperity shall not endure.
22 In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits:
The hand of every one that is in misery shall come upon him.
23 [7]When he is about to fill his belly,
God shall cast the fierceness of his wrath upon him,
And shall rain it upon him [8]while he is eating.
24 He shall flee from the iron weapon,
And the bow of brass shall strike him through.
25 He draweth it forth, and it cometh out of his body:
Yea, the glittering point cometh out of his gall;
Terrors are upon him.
26 All darkness is laid up for his treasures:
A fire not blown *by man* shall devour him;
[9]It shall consume that which is left in his tent.
27 The heavens shall reveal his iniquity,
And the earth shall rise up against him.
28 The increase of his house shall depart,
His goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.

29 This is the portion of a wicked man from God,
And the heritage appointed unto him by God.

[1] Or, *And by reason of* this *my haste is within me*
[2] Or, *But out of my understanding* my *spirit answereth me*
[3] Or, as otherwise read, *The poor shall oppress his children*
[4] Heb. *of his exchange.* [5] Or, *which he builded not*
[6] Or, *in his greed* Heb. *in his belly.*
[7] Or, *Let it be for the filling of his belly that* God *shall cast &c.*
[8] Or, *as his food* [9] Or, *It shall go ill with him that is left*

If Job's friends have been neither subdued by the exquisite pathos, nor awed by the mighty faith and far-darting spiritual power, of his last speech,—if he has been sounding abysmal depths of lonely grief, and soaring to dizzy heights of unearthly joy, to which they cannot follow him,—there has at least been no mistaking the threats which he has uttered against them, and the odious charge of persecution which he has flung at them. The next spokesman, Zophar, is the hottest and most violent of the three, and his impassioned harangue is marked at once by a fanatical fierceness and an unmitigated coarseness that are unequalled in other parts of the drama. He has long ago abandoned the hope of luring Job to repentance by promises of returning prosperity; indeed, his solitary effort in that direction was singularly half-hearted. He has now come to his proper theme, which is, in his own words, 'the portion of the wicked man, the heritage appointed unto him by God,' and he treats it with an indecent enthusiasm. It is not to be denied that he has some thoughts that breathe and words that burn,—sayings which recall the lofty utterances of true prophets,—but every syllable of his remorseless invective, whether true or false in the abstract, is tragically irrelevant and cruelly unjust in its application. The innuendo that Job is perishing in his sin, cut down as an evil-doer in the midst of his days; the suggestion that he has been a gourmet in wickedness, rolling it as a dainty morsel under his tongue; the assumption that, as an inhuman oppressor, he is being compelled to disgorge his ill-gotten wealth and deserves the fierceness of God's wrath,—all this would be incredible if it were not the natural outcome of the dogmatic rabies which devours the innocent with the guilty, the fanatical perversity which changes the truth of God into a lie.

Zophar's rhetorical diatribe is well worth studying as the

utterance of a partisan who, mistaking the passionate resentment of wounded vanity for the inspiration of true religion, magnifies God's strictness with a zeal He will not own. The speaker naïvely alludes to the haste that is in him, and this casual self-revelation illuminates his creed as well as his style. His haste explains, without justifying, the intemperate language in which he describes the ungodly and their prospects—the use of such terms as the gall and poison of asps (vv.$^{14, 16}$), the swallowing and vomiting of wealth (v.^{15}), the viper's tongue (v.^{16}), the raining of wrath (v.^{23}), devouring fire (v.^{26}), and expressions still more trying to sensitive ears (v.^{7}). And his haste explains his theology; for, making God, as every zealot does, in his own image, he conceives Him, like an impatient judge, blazing out in wrath against evil-doers, exulting in the doom which He pronounces upon them, and sending them post-haste to the place of execution. According to the zealot, the mills of God grind quickly; sentence against an evil work is wrought speedily; the triumph of the wicked is short, the joy of the godless but for a moment. When the zealot makes his own opinions and sentiments the standard of divinity, there is a magnified Zophar on the throne of the universe.

2 **Therefore do my thoughts give answer to me.** It is unlikely that Zophar would talk in this unnatural way, and the words furnish no good parallel to ^{2b}. Duhm suggests another verb (יַרְהִיבוּנִי for יְשִׁיבוּנִי), and reads, 'Therefore do my thoughts stir me up.' In ^{2b} the margin has a better reading, 'And by reason of this my haste is within me.' There should be a colon, not a full stop, at the end of the line; for 'therefore' and 'by reason of this' point forward to ^{3a}, which gives the reason of the speaker's inward excitement. **my haste.** The Psalmist said in his haste, 'All men are liars' (Ps 116^{11}); Zophar says in his haste an unkinder thing—that all sufferers are sinners. The great discoverers in nature and grace alike have brooded and experimented long before they have dogmatised. Had Zophar taken time to observe and reflect, he would have said, 'Some sufferers are saints'; had he taken still more time, he might even have added, 'and some are saviours.' By that time he would have been a different Zophar, gentler, nobler, wiser.

3 **I have heard the reproof that putteth me to shame,** lit. the rebuke of my humiliation, my ignominy (כְּלִמָּתִי). Zophar is not confessing that he has been humbled, but complaining that an assault has been made on his self-esteem. Having been rebuked for loving darkness rather than light, he can only defend himself by abusing the herald of dawn. An accent on the pronoun brings out his indignant and querulous tone—'the rebuke which putteth *me* to shame.' 'He is positively ashamed that Job persists in believing in his innocence in spite of the unmistakable judgment of his just Creator and the unanimous testimony of his candid friends.'[1] **And the spirit of my understanding answereth me.** Here the tautology, the divergence from the LXX, and a masc. verbal ending after the fem. 'spirit' (רוּחַ), all awaken suspicion as to the text. Various emendations have been suggested. Budde reads, 'And wind answers my understanding'; Duhm, 'And with wind void of understanding answerest thou me'; Ley, 'And with his windy understanding he answers me.'

4 **Knowest thou *not* this of old time?** The indispensable 'not,' which is wanting in the Heb. (as the italics indicate), is found in the LXX. Zophar asks in astonishment, perhaps with a flavour of sarcasm, if Job has no sense of the reign of law, or at least of **this** law, which has been operative since man was placed upon earth. Cf. Dt 4^{32} 'since the day that God created man upon the earth.'

5 The retributive principle, as held by Zophar, is stated here in the form of a question, which Job mentally notes, and to which he will presently give an overwhelming answer (ch. 21). That Zophar and his friends were not alone in teaching the doctrine of speedy retribution is proved by such a beautiful composition as Ps 37, where it is taught that the workers of unrighteousness shall soon be cut down like the grass (v.^{2}), that in a little the wicked shall not be (v.^{10}), that Jahweh shall laugh at him, because his day (of judgment) is coming (v.^{13}), that the arms of the wicked shall be broken (v.^{17}), that they shall consume away in smoke (v.^{20}), and that, when they are cut off, the righteous shall see it (v.^{34}). The Psalmist has a calmer mind than Zophar,

[1] Dillon, 77.

and his 'little while' is probably a much more elastic term than that of the Naamathite; but his simple, elementary, and perhaps tentative, doctrine is inadequate, and, if it is once hardened into a dogma, it becomes false.[1] Some longer plummet is needed to sound the depths of human sorrow. The writer of Ps 73 is troubled by the same enigma of the prosperity of the wicked; but, while he too believes that the godless shall perish (v.[27]), he is careful not to say 'soon,' and he finds his own consolation not in a theory of retributive justice, but in an uninterrupted fellowship with God.

6 **Though his excellency mount up**—lit. his height tower aloft—**to the heavens.** Zophar's language has here a kind of prophetic ring. Cf. the warning of Obadiah (v.[4]), 'Though thou mount on high as the eagle, and though thy nest be set among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence, saith Jahweh.' See also Am 9^{2}, Is 14^{13-15}; and one cannot forget Mt 11^{21}, Lk 10^{13}. It is not Zophar's sermon against pride that makes him a false prophet, but his application of it to Job.

7 **he shall perish for ever like his own dung.** If the revolting metaphor seems characteristic of the speaker, there is even for these words a kind of prophetic parallel in Elijah's denunciation of the Tyrian princess: 'And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel' (2 K 9^{37}). The exigencies of the retributive doctrine bring together the strangest varieties of victims—such as a Job and a Jezebel.

8 **He shall fly away as a dream.** Here the speaker echoes Isaiah (29^{8}) and 'Asaph' (Ps 73^{20}), whose words should be translated, 'They shall be as a dream when one wakes: When Thou rousest Thyself, Thou shalt despise their image.'

9 **Neither shall his place any more behold him.** The LXX omits this verse, which is evidently borrowed, with slight changes, from 7^{8-10}. Cf. the pathetic words, free from all animus, in Ps 103^{16}, where man (not the wicked man) is compared to a flower over which the wind passes, 'and the place thereof shall know it no more.'

10 **His children shall seek the favour of the poor.** The parallelism of **his children** and **his hands** is strange, and how

[1] See Kirkpatrick, *The Psalms*, i. 187.

could the hands of the dead oppressor give back his wealth? Making a textual change in the second line, Budde suggests the reading (though he does not put it in his translation), 'His sons shall seek the favour of the poor, And his children (יְלָדָיו for יָדָיו) shall give back his wealth.' Zophar either forgets that Job's sons are all dead, or he might plead that he is for the moment speaking generally. Though he and his friends have the habit of talking somewhat at large, their remote allusions are no less cruel than their plainest rebukes.

11 **His bones are full of his youth, But it** (his youth) **shall lie down with him in the dust.** This is a striking way of saying that he shall die in his prime. The dramatist makes all his characters speak poetically. The old translation, once proverbial, 'His bones are full of *the sin of* his youth'—rotten in consequence of his debauchery—says the opposite of what is meant, which is that the youthful, marrowy vigour of his bones does not help him when the hand of God touches him. '"Whom the gods love die young" was said of yore,'[1] but never in Israel, where long life was supposed to be Heaven's seal upon virtue, and premature death its judgment upon sin. Here, as elsewhere, Job's friends are the representatives of the orthodox popular doctrine, which the poet is seeking to undermine.

12–14 **Though wickedness be sweet.** Sin is like a delicious morsel which a gourmet retains as long as he can in his mouth, relishing but sparing it, loath to let it go, extracting from it the utmost possibility of sweetness, only to find that it suddenly turns to the poison of asps as soon as he swallows it. (The companion picture of the connoisseur in wine is found in Pr $23^{31.\,32}$.) The poet elaborates the figure of epicureanism in sin, not that he cares to linger over its details, but because he has the dramatic instinct, and wishes to make Zophar speak consistently with his character.

15 **He hath swallowed . . . he shall vomit.** Another of the coarse but expressive metaphors of which Zophar has a superabundance. The sin of the previous verse is now particularised. Ill-gotten wealth is like food which the stomach

[1] Byron, quoting Menander, *Ὃν οἱ θεοὶ φιλοῦσιν ἀποθνήσκει νέος*, and Plautus, 'Quem Di diligunt adolescens moritur.'

refuses to retain. The LXX translators could not bring themselves to write the second line, in which God is represented as using an emetic, and substituted the curious words, 'An angel shall drag him out of his house' (ἐξ οἰκίας instead of ἐκ κοιλίας).

16 **He shall suck the poison of asps.** This may be a pregnant construction—He shall suck a morsel of food, thinking it sweet, but shall find it to be the poison of asps (this would be a mere variation of ^{14b}); or the meaning may be, Asps shall sting him, and his body shall suck the poison. The parallelism favours the second explanation.

17 Here the parallelism has been disturbed, and the Heb. of the second line is impossible. 'The flowing streams' is lit. 'the streams of, the brooks of' (נַהֲרֵי נַחֲלֵי), and one of the two words seems to be a dittograph. With the help of the LXX, Duhm reads, 'He shall not feed on the milk of the meadows, On valleys of honey or butter.' Klostermann's suggestion is better, 'He shall not look upon rivers of oil (reading יִצְחָר for נַהֲרֵי), On streams of honey and butter.'

18 The text of this and the next verse is uncertain, and the LXX has been obliged to resort to guesswork. The lumbering lines of uncertain meaning are very unlike the poet's artistic work. Making omissions and textual changes, Duhm reads, 'He increaseth gain, and is not of good cheer, His exchange, and doth not rejoice.'

20 Read with marg., 'Because he hath no quietness in his greed,' lit. in his belly. In the second line the LXX reads, 'His safety is not in his possessions.'

22 The LXX and Vulgate have 'misery' instead of 'one that is in misery' (עָמֵל for עֲמֻל), and this gives a vigorous reading, 'In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits; Every power of misery shall come upon him.'

23 The first line should probably be struck out as a gloss on ^{22a}. In ^{23c} the word translated 'while he is eating' (בְּלַחֲמוֹ) may be a corruption of the ordinary word for food (לֶחֶם), hence 'as his food' in the marg. The LXX has 'pains' (ὀδύνας = חֲבָלִים). Others suggest, 'And shall rain snares' (Ps 11^6), or 'terrors' (בַּלָּהוֹת).

24, 25 The figure changes, and the sinner is wounded by armed men. In ^{25a} the LXX gives a better reading, 'And the

missile cometh out of his back,' having pierced him through. ^{25c} should form a couplet with ^{26a}.

26 In the first line the LXX has the simple reading, 'Darkness is laid up for him.' In the second, the striking phrase **A fire not blown**, means one that begins mysteriously, needing no breath of man to blow it into a flame (*e.g.* 1^{16}). The text of ^{26c} is very doubtful, and Duhm proposes to read, 'The spoiler shall rise up against his tent.'

27 **The heavens . . . the earth.** If Job's consciousness of innocence has brought him to the triumphant assertion that heaven and earth are on his side,—that his Witness is in heaven, and earth will not cover his blood ($16^{18.\ 19}$),—Zophar makes the pitiless retort that heaven will reveal the wicked man's iniquity, and the earth will rise up against him.

28 **The increase of his house shall depart.** The tame and barely intelligible *dénouement* found in the Heb. text is not in the manner of Zophar, from whom we expect a telling climax. We get it by partly following the LXX, which reads in ^{28a} **Destruction sweeps away his house,** and partly by changing (with Duhm) the word 'shall flow away' into 'the curse' (נְגָרוֹת into מְגֵעֶרֶת) and reading, **And a curse in the day of his wrath.**

29 **This is the portion of the wicked man from God, And the heritage appointed unto him by God.** Like Bildad (18^{21}), Zophar impressively concludes by calling attention to his own speech, with the air of a prophet who knows the counsels of God and is entitled to speak in His awful name. Was he, however, really fit to do so? There are, no doubt, human minds which have a wonderful affinity with the Divine Mind; but it is not every intellect that can transmit the white radiance of eternity without staining it; in particular, no one is capable of revealing God who believes that any creature of His will 'perish for ever like his own dung.' Plotinus said, 'He must be God-like who desires to see God'; and a Greater than Plotinus uttered the beatitude, 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'

'Yea, only as the heart is clean
May larger vision yet be mine,
For mirrored in its depths are seen
The things divine.'

XXI. 1–34.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.

1 Then Job answered and said,
2 Hear diligently my speech;
And let this be your consolations.
3 Suffer me, and I also will speak;
And after that I have spoken, [1]mock on.
4 As for me, is my complaint [2]to man?
And why should I not be impatient?
5 [3]Mark me, and be astonished,
And lay your hand upon your mouth.
6 Even when I remember I am troubled,
And horror taketh hold on my flesh.
7 Wherefore do the wicked live,
Become old, yea, wax mighty in power?
8 Their seed is established with them in their sight,
And their offspring before their eyes.
9 Their houses are [4]safe from fear,
Neither is the rod of God upon them.
10 Their bull gendereth, and faileth not;
Their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.
11 They send forth their little ones like a flock,
And their children dance.
12 They [5]sing to the timbrel and harp,
And rejoice at the sound of the pipe.
13 They spend their days in prosperity,
And in a moment they go down to [6]Sheol.
14 Yet they said unto God, Depart from us;
For we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.
15 What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?
And what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?
16 [7]Lo, their prosperity is not in their hand:
The counsel of the wicked is far from me.
17 [8]How oft is it that the lamp of the wicked is put out?
That their calamity cometh upon them?
That *God* distributeth sorrows in his anger?
18 That they are as stubble before the wind,
And as chaff that the storm carrieth away?
19 [9] *Ye say*, God layeth up his iniquity for his children.
Let him recompense it unto himself, that he may know it.
20 Let his own eyes see his destruction,
And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

21 For what pleasure hath he in his house after him,
When the number of his months is cut off in the midst?
22 Shall any teach God knowledge?
Seeing he judgeth those that are high.
23 One dieth in his full strength,
Being wholly at ease and quiet:
24 His [10]breasts are full of milk,
And the marrow of his bones is moistened.
25 And another dieth in bitterness of soul,
And never tasteth of good.
26 They lie down alike in the dust,
And the worm covereth them.
27 Behold, I know your thoughts,
And the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me.
28 For ye say, Where is the house of the prince?
And where is the tent wherein the wicked dwelt?
29 Have ye not asked them that go by the way?
And do ye not know their tokens?
30 That the evil man is [11]reserved to the day of calamity?
That they are [12]led forth to the day of wrath?
31 Who shall declare his way to his face?
And who shall repay him what he hath done?
32 [13]Yet shall he be borne to the grave,
And [14]shall keep watch over the tomb.
33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him,
And all men shall draw after him,
As there were innumerable before him.
34 How then comfort ye me [15]in vain,
Seeing in your answers there remaineth *only* [16]falsehood?

[1] Or, *thou shalt mock* [2] Or, *of* [3] Heb. *Look unto me.*
[4] Or, *in peace, without fear* [5] Heb. *lift up* the voice.
[6] Or, *the grave* [7] Or, Ye say, *Lo &c.*
[8] Or, *How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out, and* how oft *cometh their calamity upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger. They are as stubble . . . away.*
[9] Or, *God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it. His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink &c.*
[10] Or, *milk pails* [11] Or, *spared in &c.* [12] Or, *led away in &c.*
[13] Or, *Moreover he is borne to the grave, and keepeth watch over his tomb. The clods of the valley are sweet unto him; and all men draw &c.*
[14] Or, *they shall keep* [15] Or, *with vanity* [16] Or, *faithlessness*

Job differs from his friends in that he is not the possessor of a formal theological creed, but a seeker after truth; and, among those who have their faces towards the light, he has the further distinction—one might even venture to say the benefit—of being

an acute sufferer. The fatal disease which wastes his body is so far from injuring his real manhood, that it at once intensifies and purifies all his powers of intellect, heart, and will. Nothing could be more unfair than to suggest that, because he is a Semite, he has not a logical mind, for, though all his arguments are saturated with emotion,—though he sometimes appears to be a mere man of feeling, governed by his moods, and driven hither and thither by them,—he has all the time a true investigator's passion for facts, and, if he is willing to be led even into logical contradictions, that is because he has the instinctive assurance of faith that all apparent antinomies must be ultimately reconcilable in a higher truth. He has two different trains of thought to follow, and they bring him alternately to light and darkness, hope and despair. As long as he looks steadily at the indisputable fact of his own integrity, he is so sure of his final vindication that he can not only ignore the opinions of men, but even outsoar the present wrath of God to rest in His eternal faithfulness and mercy. When, however, he is again compelled, by the false theodicy of his friends, to face the no less indisputable fact of the moral disorder of the world, his mind is once more utterly bewildered, and the ecstasy of faith smitten by the agony of doubt.

As in the first cycle of the debate, so in the second, Job does not reply to the arguments and assertions of his friends until each of them has spoken. They have appealed to the course of the world from the beginning of time, as proving the law that the good and ill fortunes of men are determined by their characters; they have revelled in lurid descriptions of the fate of the wicked, and Zophar, in particular, has just declared that, while the ungodly man may prosper for a little while, his ruin is sudden, swift, and overwhelming. Job has the advantage over his friends in that, while their minds move in the vacant region of *a priori* thought, he lives in the realm of experience, so that he has no difficulty in confronting their fine theory with obdurate facts which cannot be gainsaid. It is with no light heart that he points out grave anomalies in the government of the world, for all that is highest in him rises up in protest against injustice in God; but he has to face the truth that the godless attain power, live on the fat of the land, have large and

happy families, attain a good old age, and die in peace. At the same time, he scornfully rebukes the presumption that would impose petty theories upon God, and prescribe the laws by which the world *ought* to be governed. His friends have emphasised the difference between the fates of the righteous and the wicked, making virtue and happiness, vice and misery, correlative terms; but to him it is the equality of the righteous and the wicked that is inexplicable. He appeals to the reports of men who have travelled with open eyes in other lands, where they have seen how the ungodly are prosperous in life, honoured in death, remembered and imitated in after days. With such facts staring him in the face, he refuses to accept the bitter-sweet doctrine of his friends.

2 **And let this be your consolations.** The LXX has the sing. (παράκλησις), which is perhaps to be preferred. The one consolation which Job now asks of his friends is that they carefully listen to him. They have offered him as the consolations of God (15^{11}) an old theory of providence which makes him out to be a grievous sinner. He is about to give them facts which constitute a terrible indictment of the divine government of the world, and if they will lend him their ears they will afford him the only poor semblance of comfort which he now asks of them.

3 **mock on:** or, 'thou shalt mock.' If the Heb. is right, Zophar, as the last speaker, is addressed. When his doctrine of providence, which derides the miserable, has been pulverised, he may continue his cruel taunts if he pleases. The LXX has the plur. and inserts a negative, 'You will not mock me,' *i.e.* when you have heard my words, you will no longer be disposed to mock.

4 **Is my complaint to man?** Better, Does it concern man? or, Is it against man? If Job's complaint were merely against human beings, he would comfort himself in God and be patient; but as it is against God, nothing can console him, and he will not even try to be patient.

5 **lay your hand upon your mouth:** in mute amazement. The injustice of the government of the world must dumbfound them. Job does not revel in the anomalies of providence, and would indeed infinitely rather know nothing about them; but he is not one of those who suppose that where ignorance is bliss

'tis folly to be wise. He faces facts though they appal him, and he expects his friends to do the same.

6 **Even when I remember I am troubled.** This verse is the perfect self-portraiture of an honest sceptic, confronted by facts which jeopardise his old faith, shuddering at the bare thought of a world not governed by a good and loving God, and feeling that if his doubt is not relieved he must despair.

7 **Wherefore do the wicked live, Become old, yea, wax mighty in power?** Job, who, though an Edomite, speaks as a true Israelite, believes that the promise of long life and prosperity has been given to dutiful children and God-fearing men (as in Ex 20^{12}, Ps 34^{12-14}). He and his family have fulfilled the conditions, yet his sons and daughters have been cut down in their youth, while he has suffered the loss of everything except bare life. Meantime length of days and increase of power, domestic happiness and peace, are the portion of the wicked. And Job cannot help uttering his importunate Wherefore? Cf. Jer 12^{1}. It is fortunate that the text of this wonderful speech is, on the whole, well preserved.

8 **Their seed is established:** to be heirs of the family wealth and traditions. This is in reply to Eliphaz—'The company of the godless shall be barren' (15^{34}), to Bildad—'He shall have neither son nor son's son among his people' (18^{19}), and to Zophar—'His children shall seek the favour of the poor' (20^{10}).

9 **Their houses are safe from fear.** The Heb. reads, 'Their houses are safety,' but the noun should doubtless be a verb (שְׁלָמוּ instead of שָׁלוֹם). The LXX has **Their houses flourish** (*εὐθηνοῦσιν*). This is Job's answer to Bildad's assertion that brimstone shall be scattered upon their habitation (18^{15}), and to many similar predictions.

10 **Their bull . . . their cow.** It was the older, pre-exilic teaching that the righteous man is blessed in the fruit of his cattle, the increase of his kine, and the young of his flock (Dt 28^{4}). But Job finds that Nature, or, as they have always said in the East, God, is strangely impartial.

11, 12 **They send forth their little ones like a flock:** forth into the sunny meadows, where they lead an idyllic life, dancing like lambs, playing on timbrel, harp and pipe, singing and rejoicing. Job does not grudge the 'little ones' of the

ungodly their innocent mirth, but he cannot help thinking of other children who filled another home with glee, and his broken heart sends up to heaven its protest.

13 **In a moment they go down to Sheol.** Prosperous to the end, they pass without a struggle or a groan into the unseen world. 'They have no bands in their death' (Ps 73^4). Sudden death, so long as it was natural, was not regarded by the Hebrews as a thing to be prayed against, but rather to be desired. Over against the orthodox, conventional stories of the death of the wicked by calamity and plague, Job sets unquestionable facts, which he naturally does not seek to generalise into a new dogma, but which are amply sufficient to refute the old one.

14, 15 If the unbelieving do not say unto God with their lips, **Depart from us**, they at least say it by their lives, in which they try to ignore His existence. Religion is distasteful to them; they do not **desire the knowledge** of God's ways; and they think they also have reason on their side, asking, **What profit should we have?** Seeing that faithful servants of God are none the better off (morally better is not the point) for their piety, they refuse to have anything to do with what is evidently an unprofitable concern. Compare 1^9 and contrast 2^{10}.

16 In order to make this verse harmonise with the context, the marg. inserts 'Ye say.' It is better (with the LXX) to substitute 'Him' for 'me' in the second line, and to read the distich interrogatively. Bickell has 'Yet hold they not happiness in their own hands? Is He not heedless of the counsel of the wicked?' Budde omits the verse.

17 **How oft is it that the lamp of the wicked is put out?** The friends have all asserted that stern retribution pursues and swiftly overtakes the wicked. Bildad, *e.g.*, has declared that 'the light of the wicked shall be put out' (18^5), and that 'calamity is ready for his halting' (18^{12}). Job answers with a sceptical 'How often?' The text of 17^c is apparently mutilated. While Duhm has asterisks indicating the loss of a line to complete the distich, Bickell cancels.

18 **And as chaff that the storm driveth away.** This is reminiscent of Ps 1^4, only what is confidently affirmed by the psalmist is questioned by the dramatist.

19, 20 Supposing that in 19^a Job is expressing the view of

his friends, the Revisers have inserted 'Ye say.' By reading the word for God (here אֵל, not the usual אֱלֹהִים) with a different pointing (אַל), Duhm and Ley get the excellent sense, **Let him not lay up iniquity for his children, Let him recompense it unto himself!** 'In the earlier Scriptures . . . the doctrine is taught that God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children unto the third and fourth generation. The idea seems to be that the fathers are still punished, their punishment falling on them in their children. The standing of the children as individuals is not thought of, nor the question what relation the calamity has to them.'[1] While the friends adhere to this view,[2] Job repudiates it, his strong sense of justice asserting itself in the demand that the individual shall be punished only for his own sins. His words are in harmony with Jer 31[29. 30] and Ezk 18, which contain the earliest remonstrances against the old Hebrew idea that posterity suffers for ancestral sins.

22 **Shall any teach God knowledge?** Job presents the sin of dogmatism in a new and startling light, as an attempt to teach God. Instead of bravely facing and frankly admitting the hard facts of existence, Job's optimistic friends assume that the world must be governed in a certain ideal way, and then maintain that it is so governed, refusing to see anything contrary to their rose-coloured philosophy, which is at once so sentimental and so cruel. They evidently do not realise that they are trying to be the teachers, while they undoubtedly are the flatterers, of God (cf. 13[8]). Job wonders at their presumption even more than at their unkindness.

23–26 **One dieth in his full strength. . . . And another dieth in bitterness of soul.** Two beautiful four-line stanzas describe the opposite fortunes of two men who lie down in the same dust at last, one indiscriminate fate befalling them both. While it is certain that the life of the one has been, in ordinary language, a success, and that of the other a failure, who will undertake to judge, *a priori*, which of the two was the better man? Can it be denied that there is a wide sphere in which men are treated without respect to their characters? The sentiment

[1] Davidson, *Theol. of the OT*, 282.

[2] At the same time, Bildad assumes (8[4]) that Job's children have been cut off for transgressions of their own.

which pervades these verses is sympathy with the common lot—*mentem mortalia tangunt.* Without ceasing to be a devout theist, and without blurring moral distinctions, the poet is evidently feeling his way towards a noble humanism, allied in his mind with a growing sense of the Divine magnanimity and impartiality.

24 **His breasts are full of milk.** The ancient translators assumed that, because 'bones' are mentioned in the second line, some part of the body must be alluded to in the first (LXX ἔγκατα, Jerome *viscera*); but the Heb. word (עֲטִינָיו) probably means troughs or buckets; marg. 'milk pails.'

27, 28 **I know your thoughts.** The friends do not say outright that their pictures of the ruin of the wicked man are meant for Job, but it is very easy for him to read their secret thoughts and detect their malicious **devices.** When they refer to the fall of the house of **the prince** (although they have not yet expressly used that term), he knows what they mean. 28b reads lit. 'And where (is) the tent, the dwellings, of the wicked?' The line is too long, and it is evident that either 'tent' or 'dwellings' should be deleted. The word for 'tent' (אֹהֶל) may be a dittograph of the somewhat similar word for 'where' (אַיֵּה).

29, 30 **Have ye not asked them that go by the way?** Better, **those who travel.** If the friends would leave their theories for a little, and consult those who have been in contact with realities in the great world, and who can give them **tokens** (אֹתוֹת)—not mere generalities, but concrete instances—they would find that evil men are **spared in** (exactly the opposite of the RV's 'reserved for') the day of calamity, and **led away** (scathless) in the day of evil. After all, Job suggests, we do not know everything even in wise Edom. 'He prays his friends to turn away from tradition, from the idle and dead ecclesiastical reiteration of what has long since ceased to be true, and to look abroad over the world, to hear what those have to say who have been outside the narrow valleys of Uz.'[1]

31 **Who shall declare his way to his face?** Some well-known godless ruler is probably before the poet's mind. Who is bold enough nowadays to rebuke such a man to his face for his sins, as Elijah rebuked Ahab?

[1] *Mark Rutherford*, 289.

32 Here pres. tenses make the thoughts more vivid: **Yet is he borne to the grave**, etc. The godless prince has a stately funeral, and a guard keeps watch at his mausoleum. The interpretation that he himself in effigy keeps watch over his tomb is not so likely.

33 **And the clods of the valley are sweet unto him.** With this poetic fancy the poet gives the finishing touch to a picture into which he has not put a single harsh line. Cf. the pagan *Sit tibi terra levis* (abbreviated *S.T.T.L.*), and the Christian *Requiescat in pace.* 'Inexpressibly touching is the last verse but one. It is a revelation of the inmost heart striving to be at peace with death.'[1] When such an **evil man**, so successful and so honoured, at length dies, he naturally leaves many imitators—'all men draw after him.' Without in the least approving of such hero-worship, Job simply calls attention to it. [33b], which as a third line at once arouses suspicion, proves itself by its inanity to be the work of some poetaster who tried in vain to imitate the poet.

34 If these things are true, Job cannot be comforted with a doctrine which is proved to be false. The concluding word (מְעַל, faithlessness, **fraud**) is very strong.

XXII. 1–30.

THE HIGH *A PRIORI* ROAD.

1 Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,
2 Can a man be profitable unto God?
Surely he that is wise is profitable unto himself.
3 Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous?
Or is it gain *to him*, that thou makest thy ways perfect?
4 Is it [1]for thy fear *of him* that he reproveth thee,
That he entereth with thee into judgement?
5 Is not thy wickedness great?
Neither is there any end to thine iniquities.
6 For thou hast taken pledges of thy brother for nought,
And stripped the naked of their clothing.
7 Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink,
And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.

[1] *Mark Rutherford*, 289.

8 But as for [2]the mighty man, he had the [3]earth;
And [4]the honourable man, he dwelt in it.
9 Thou hast sent widows away empty,
And the arms of the fatherless have been broken.
10 Therefore snares are round about thee,
And sudden fear troubleth thee,
11 [5]Or darkness, that thou canst not see,
And abundance of waters cover thee.
12 Is not God in the height of heaven?
And behold the [6]height of the stars, how high they are!
13 And thou sayest, What doth God know?
Can he judge through the thick darkness?
14 Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not;
And he walketh [7]in the circuit of heaven.
15 [8]Wilt thou keep the old way
Which wicked men have trodden?
16 Who were snatched away before their time,
Whose foundation was poured out as a stream:
17 Who said unto God, Depart from us;
And, What can the Almighty do [9]for [10]us?
18 Yet he filled their houses with good things:
But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.
19 The righteous see it, and are glad;
And the innocent laugh them to scorn:
20 *Saying*, Surely they that did rise up against us are cut off,
And [11]the remnant of them the fire hath consumed.
21 Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace:
[12]Thereby good shall come unto thee.
22 Receive, I pray thee, [13]the law from his mouth,
And lay up his words in thine heart.
23 If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up;
[14]If thou put away unrighteousness far from thy tents.
24 And lay thou *thy* [15]treasure [16]in the dust,
And *the gold of* Ophir among the stones of the brooks;
25 And the Almighty shall be thy [15] treasure,
And [17]precious silver unto thee.
26 For then shalt thou delight thyself in the Almighty,
And shalt lift up thy face unto God.
27 Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee;
And thou shalt pay thy vows.
28 Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee;
And light shall shine upon thy ways.
29 When they [18]cast *thee* down, thou shalt say, *There is* lifting up;
And [19]the humble person he shall save.

30 He shall deliver [20]*even* him that is not innocent:
Yea, he shall be delivered through the cleanness of thine hands.

[1] Or, *for fear of thee* [2] Heb. *the man of arm.* [3] Or, *land*
[4] Heb. *he whose person is accepted.*
[5] Or, *Or dost thou not see the darkness, and the flood of waters that covereth thee?* [6] Heb. *head.* [7] Or, *on the vault*
[8] Or, *Dost thou mark* [9] Or, *to* [10] Heb. *them.*
[11] Or, *that which remained to them* Or, *their abundance*
[12] Or, as otherwise read, *Thereby shall thine increase be good.*
[13] Or, *instruction*
[14] Or, *Thou shalt put away . . . and shalt lay up*
[15] Heb. *ore.* [16] Or, *on the earth*
[17] Or, *precious silver shall be thine* [18] Or, *are made low*
[19] Heb. *him that is lowly of eyes.*
[20] Many ancient versions read, *him that is innocent.*

It is remarkable that while Job, who began the great debate in passionate excitement, pouring forth the extravagant and even frenzied language of anguish and despair, ere long recovers his balance, becoming comparatively calm in manner and temperate in speech, his friends, on the other hand, who were at first so cool and judicial, gradually lose their self-control, and, in vehement anger at Job's impenitent obstinacy, charge him with crimes which merit all the thunders of divine wrath. In the third cycle, as before, the aged Eliphaz is the opener. Attempting to be logical, but only succeeding in being fallacious, he argues that, since God cannot reasonably be supposed to chastise Job for his piety, He must be doing it for his sins. Convinced on that score, Eliphaz does not blush to accuse Job—without one jot or tittle of evidence, and simply on the basis of his theory—of all the crimes which usually lie at the door of an opulent Eastern tyrant — selfishness, dishonesty, hard-heartedness, and avarice. Job has imagined, like the free-thinkers—so it is assumed—that as God dwells high above the stars, careless of earth and its petty concerns, men may sin with impunity. Eliphaz severely asks him if he means to repeat the impieties which brought flood and fire upon the primeval world. As if conscious, however, of having gone somewhat too far, the speaker closes in the loftier and nobler strain in which all the speeches of the first cycle ended, promising that, if Job will make his peace with God, he will after all rejoice once more in the divine favour, and himself become a saviour of others in trouble.

2, 3 **Can a man be profitable unto God? . . . Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous?** In these two luminous verses, Eliphaz affords us an insight into his first principles. He wishes to give a final and convincing proof that the cause of Job's sufferings—the root of the matter—is in the sufferer himself. It cannot, he argues, be in God; for, since God reaps no advantage and derives no pleasure from the conduct of men, He is under no temptation either to condemn the innocent or to justify the guilty. Unaffected by personal considerations, passionless and unconcerned, He metes out rewards and punishments, not arbitrarily, but with strict impartiality and almost automatic precision. The cause of suffering is therefore not in Him, so that it must be in man: which was to be proved. The reasoning, however, does not hold water. It not only assumes that all the possibilities of explanation have been exhausted by a syllogism, but it unwarrantably premises that all suffering is retributive—that pain can have no meaning, for God or man, but penalty. Eliphaz and his school have no divination of the mysterious depths of sorrow. They are wilfully blind to the massacre of the innocents, the blood of martyrs, the travail of creation, the sufferings of God. And when Eliphaz teaches that a man cannot be **profitable unto God**, that it is **no pleasure** to the Almighty if Job is righteous, no **gain** to Him if Job makes his ways perfect, he shows how crude and formal is his conception of righteousness. He wisely, indeed, brings man's conduct into a certain relation to God; but since, in his view of the world, God and man remain strictly external to, and separate from, each other,—since they have no deep, heart-felt interest in each other, and hence no yearning for friendship,—since each of them acts as an isolated individual, God requiring, and man paying, the dues of obedience,—there can be no thought of basing morality upon love. The God whom Eliphaz worships is a cold, distant, passionless Being, the apotheosis of absolute power and rigid justice, neither giving nor seeking love —the God of the Moslem and the Deist, certainly not of the Prophets and the Psalmists. No profit, pleasure, or gain? 'As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee' (Is 62^5). 'I will have love and not sacrifice' (Hos 6^6) —there, in a word, is God's profit, pleasure, gain. Eliphaz

himself, in a somewhat more gracious mood, becomes at the end of this very speech the preacher of a higher faith.

4 **Is it for thy fear** *of him* **that he reproveth thee?** As before, Eliphaz uses the word **fear** in the technical sense of devoutness, religion (see p. 61). He ironically asks if Job imagines himself to be reproved for his piety. That supposition being absurd, only one conclusion is possible—that Job is being punished for his sin. It never occurs to Eliphaz to ask if a man may suffer *in spite of* his piety. Such a question would take him out of the narrow seas into the wide ocean, which he is afraid to explore.

5–9 **Is not thy wickedness great?** Eliphaz now deliberately accuses Job of being a heinous sinner, and even formulates a specific charge against him, deriving the details, however, not from credible evidence, but from his own inner consciousness, aided by a general knowledge of the sins of grasping and merciless tyranny which usually accompany the exercise of irresponsible power. Job is painted, not as he is, by a realist, nor as he might be, by an idealist, but as he seems to an impressionist, who looks at him through the dogmatic haze of his own mind, and convinces himself that he sees a villain. It is strange to reflect that the **iniquities without end** which are ascribed to Job are all devoutly postulated *in majorem Dei gloriam.* How well the poet can beget in the mind of his reader the feeling that God has sometimes need to be defended from His friends!

6 **And stripped the naked of their clothing,** *i.e.* the half-naked, the scantily clothed. A man was said to be 'naked' when he had on no outer garment, only the close-fitting tunic which was worn next the skin (cf. Is 20^{2}, Ja 2^{15}). An old and merciful law forbade a creditor to keep a debtor's outer robe in pledge after sunset (Ex 22^{26}). To take pledges **for nought** was to do it wantonly, without necessity.

8 Eliphaz's **mighty** and **honourable** man, who takes the garments of the poor in pledge, disregards the hungry and the thirsty, despoils widows, and crushes orphans, is, of course, Job himself. As the marg. indicates, he is lit. 'the man of arm' and 'he whose person is accepted' (אִישׁ זְרוֹעַ, נְשׂוּא פָנִים, used to describe Naaman in 2 K 5^{1}). The verse seems to disturb the

portraiture, and Siegfried regards it as a gloss; but even Bickell accepts it.

11 In the first line the Heb. is unintelligible, and we should probably read with the LXX, '**Thy light is become darkness.**'

12–14 Venturing to read Job's secret thoughts in his face, or to deduce them from his life, Eliphaz imagines him pursuing a remarkably Epicurean train of thought:—that, God being in heaven, exalted above the stars, walking at ease in the circuit of the sky, and not concerning Himself with the affairs of earth, from which He is hidden by thick clouds and darkness, there can be nothing for man to fear. Many similar delineations of the mind of a free-thinker are found in the Prophets and Psalmists (*e.g.* Is 29^{15}, Ezk 8^{12}, Ps 73^{11} 94^{7}), but none of them are quite so vivid as this one given by Eliphaz, who errs only in holding it up to Job as a mirror in which he may see himself as others see him. In ^{12b} the text has probably suffered, for 'height (lit. the head) of the stars' is an awkward expression. The word for head (רֹאשׁ) is very like the preceding one for 'behold' (רְאֵה), and Budde suggests that it may be due to dittography, in which case we get the simple, natural line, **And behold the stars, how high they are.**

15, 16 **Wilt thou keep the old way?** The free-thinker, with whom Job is here identified, is apt to imagine that his ideas are advanced, modern, original; but wise men—Eliphaz suggests—know that he is either ignorant or forgetful of the solemn lessons of history, which records how insolent rebels against God in early times were destroyed by flood or fire. **Whose foundation was poured out as a stream.** This somewhat vague language probably means that in the traditional flood the solid ground on which men stood became fluid, like a stream.

17, 18 These lines are borrowed, verbally or substantially, from $21^{14\text{-}16}$; and, as it is scarcely likely that the poet would make Eliphaz imitate Job, they must be regarded as an insertion. ^{19a} is the natural continuation of ^{16b}.

19, 20 It is better to use the past tense, **The righteous saw it, and were glad** (so the LXX, *ἰδόντες δίκαιοι ἐγέλασαν*). Good men in those far-off times, as Eliphaz sermonises, were jubilant when they witnessed the destruction of the wicked, and the

innocent laughed the guilty to scorn. With this language compare Ps 107^{43}, where, however, it is not the humiliation and death of the bad, but the exaltation and prosperity of the good, that is the cause of the rejoicing and thanksgiving. V.^{20} contains the words which righteous men of old are supposed to have said or sung in their hour of triumph; and the ancient **fire** — perhaps that which destroyed the cities of the Plain — apparently has in Eliphaz's view its modern parallel in the lightning which consumed Job's **abundance** (יִתְרָה, alternatively 'the remnant').

21–30 As if smitten with some compunction, and moved by a desire to soften the effect of his accusations, Eliphaz suddenly turns from threats to promises, and in the rest of his speech seeks to win Job to repentance with alluring hopes. He thus ends his last address in the same benignant, conciliatory, almost fatherly manner in which he began his first. And it is remarkable that as soon as he becomes kinder and gentler in tone, he modifies his theology in spite of himself, illustrating the principle that a noble and generous spirit is creative of a true creed, a cruel and selfish spirit of a false creed.

21 **Acquaint thyself with God.** Only in one other place is the Heb. word (Hiph. of סָכַן) used in this sense. In Ps 139^{3} the poet wonders that God is acquainted with all his ways; while here Job is exhorted to acquaint himself with God. The advice in itself is the very best that can be given to any man. It is faulty only because of the assumption that Job especially needs it, and perhaps that Eliphaz is exceptionally qualified to give it. 'In nothing is the amazing power of the consummate artist to whom we owe this poem more apparent than in the fact that, even when he makes the speakers in his drama wholly wrong in intention and in the moral they point, he nevertheless puts into their lips the purest truths couched in the most appropriate and beautiful forms.'[1] The remarkable words of this verse 'have in New Testament times been blessed to the conversion of as many persons as almost any other text in Scripture.'[2] But when Delitzsch's translation represents Eliphaz as saying, 'Make friends with God,' it ascribes to him an

[1] Cox, 294 f. [2] Marshall, *Job and His Comforters*, 145.

idea which, to his own great misfortune, never occurred to him. The God of Eliphaz has no friends. He may be feared as the Giver of law to all men, and even delighted in as the Giver of prosperity to the righteous, but never loved for His own sake. **Thereby good shall come unto thee.** The 'good' which is promised is returning prosperity, interpreted as the renewal of the divine favour. A profounder religion than that of Eliphaz was needed to liberate the highest good from the material welfare in which it was so long entangled.

22 **Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth.** The word for 'law' (תּוֹרָה) is without the art., and should probably be rendered **instruction,** as the poet is throughout remarkably independent of legalism. Eliphaz doubtless refers to such teaching as he and other wise men were qualified to give. He regarded his night-oracle as a supernatural utterance (4^{16}), and his comfortable words were the consolations of God (15^{11}).

23 **If thou return to the Almighty.** The verb (שׁוּב) is the word regularly applied to the sinner who turns from the error of his ways and penitently seeks God—who, in fact, is converted. The gracious promises of Eliphaz to Job are all blemished by the assumption on which they are based—that his friend has wandered from God and needs to return, has grievously sinned and must repent. **thou shalt be built up.** This does not give a good sense, and the LXX reading **and humblest thyself** is evidently right. The difference in Heb. is extremely small (the LXX having behind it תִּעָנֶה instead of תִּבָּנֶה).

24, 25 These verses contain two paronomasias (עָפָר and אוֹפִיר, בָּצֶר and בְּצוּר) which are not in the poet's manner; the translation 'treasure' is a mere guess, the Heb. word being unknown; and the words for 'precious silver' (or, 'heaps of silver') are, as the *Oxf. Heb. Lex.* says, very dubious. The verses disturb the train of ideas, and are most probably an insertion.

26–28 **For then shalt thou delight thyself in the Almighty.** Nothing could well be finer than Eliphaz's picture of a religious life in days of prosperity—the righteous man delighting himself in God, lifting a free and open face to Heaven, praying and being heard, paying his vows, laying his plans and getting them suc-

cessfuly executed, walking always in the sunshine. It is a religious life in the shadow that Eliphaz cannot understand; adversity always suggests to him the wrath of God, and in the interpretation of it he does injustice to those who are most in need of sympathy, being smitten of God and afflicted.

29, 30 The Heb. text of these verses has evidently suffered. The only line that is certainly sound is [29b]. [29a] is unintelligible; [30a] is too short; the words for 'not innocent' (אִי נָקִי) are very curious, and most of the ancient versions omit the negative. Making a number of emendations, Duhm suggests the following rendering of the whole: 'For He frustrates the proud undertaking, But He helps the lowly; He fulfils the desire of the innocent, And he is delivered through the cleanness of his hands.'

XXIII. 1–17.

THE FIGHT OF FAITH.

1 Then Job answered and said,
2 Even to-day is my complaint [1]rebellious:
[2]My stroke is heavier than my groaning.
3 Oh that I knew where I might find him,
That I might come even to his seat!
4 I would order my cause before him,
And fill my mouth with arguments.
5 I would know the words which he would answer me,
And understand what he would say unto me.
6 Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power?
Nay; [3]but he would give heed unto me.
7 There the upright might reason with him;
So should I be delivered for ever from my judge.
8 Behold, I go forward, but he is not *there*;
And backward, but I cannot perceive him:
9 On the left hand, when he doth work, but I cannot behold him:
He [4]hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.
10 [5]But he knoweth [6]the way that I take;
When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.
11 My foot hath held fast to his steps;
His way have I kept, and turned not aside.

12 I have not gone back from the commandment of his lips;
I have treasured up the words of his mouth [7]more than my
[8]necessary food.
13 But [9]he is in one *mind*, and who can turn him?
And what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.
14 For he performeth that which is appointed for me:
And many such things are with him.
15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence;
When I consider, I am afraid of him.
16 For God hath made my heart faint,
And the Almighty hath troubled me:
17 [10]Because I was not cut off before the darkness,
Neither did he cover the thick darkness from my face.

[1] Or, *bitter* Or, accounted *rebellion*
[2] Or, *My hand is heavy upon* (or *because of*) The Sept. and Syr. read, *His hand.* [3] Or, *he would only give heed*
[4] Or, *turneth himself to . . . him, but* [5] Or, *For*
[6] Heb. *the way* that is *with me.*
[7] Or, *more than my own law* The Sept. and Vulgate have, *in my bosom.*
[8] Or, *portion* See Pr 30[8]. [9] Or, *he is one*
[10] Or, *For I am not dismayed because of the darkness, nor because thick darkness covereth my face*

Having listened to the accusations of Eliphaz, Job in the meantime characteristically ignores them. In none of the cycles of the debate do the imputations of his friends, however deeply they may wound him, ever tempt him to rush into immediate self-defence. He always makes his self-constituted judges feel that he has first to deal with larger questions than the opinions of men. To all their suspicions and misrepresentations he opposes not only the reticence of moral strength, but the fortitude of an instinctive faith. Indeed, by questioning his integrity they unconsciously do him a great service; for, whenever he turns Godwards for the vindication of his innocence, he has his reward; the undimmed light of his moral consciousness illuminates for him the way that leads unto God. Along that road he has more than once, with a bold, pioneering faith, fought his way through hosts of difficulties; and as the result of his quest he has attained a sublime and invincible assurance that God will do him justice. In all his later mental conflicts he never quite loses sight of that achievement of faith; and as often as he follows the same train of thought, it always leads to the same goal. When God shall try him, he will come forth as gold

—a figure which implies a serene assurance at once of God's justice and of his own innocence.

But Job is here moving painfully along another way, dim and perilous, on which he confesses that his heart is faint. God makes him afraid, the Almighty troubles him; and again there rises to his lips the heart-cry for a meeting with God, for the opportunity of reasoning everything out with his Judge. The cause of his soul-trouble is now not so much God's mysterious treatment of himself, as the endless moral confusion of the world around him, in particular the anomalous prosperity of the wicked and adversity of the righteous. That God is at work in the affairs of men is unquestionable, the manifestations of His power being everywhere; and yet Job cannot find him anywhere—cannot detect the presence and operation of that righteous God, in whom his heart constrains him to believe.

2 **Even to-day is my complaint rebellious.** This is the only line which indicates that the discussion is extended over several days, each cycle perhaps occupying one day. Remembering past accusations, Job, with a touch of irony, warns his friends that he is still going to be 'rebellious.' He is not yet the humble person whom Eliphaz has just depicted (22^{29}). Knowing that his criticism of the divine government of the world will be condemned as insolent and irreverent, he confesses beforehand that his rebellion, if it be such, is quite deliberate. According to the friends, every man who ventures to reason and expostulate with God is a rebel. And if the exercise of intelligence in religion is sinful, so that a servant of God (like a soldier or a slave) must not make reply or reason why,—if lordship is the sole function of God, and obedience the whole duty of man,—then the friends are right and Job wrong, the only true religion being resignation (*i.e.* Islam). But if it is desirable that a man's devotion should be reasonable, if 'thinking is also a service of God,'[1] then it cannot be wrong for any of His servants reverently to ask 'why?' or 'how long?' In this sense the Prophets and Psalmists, and all who use their words, are rebels. And Christ Himself in His anguish cried, 'My God, my God, why?' ^{2b} is difficult; 'my stroke' (יָדִי, my hand) can scarcely

[1] Hegel.

be right. It is possible to read, 'Though my hand is heavy upon my groaning' (marg.), *i.e.* I do my best to suppress it (but why with 'my hand'?). The LXX reads 'His (God's) hand is heavy upon my groaning,' meaning upon me who cannot help groaning.

3–5 **Oh that I knew where I might find him!** It is the chief distinction between Job and his friends that he desires to meet God and they do not. Satisfied with a distant acquaintance with God (22^{21}), they have the old-world idea that no man can see God and live. When Zophar says (11^{5}), 'Oh that God would speak!' his words are almost a malediction. But Job passionately desires what his friends superstitiously dread. To **find** the living God, to present and plead his cause before Him, to hear Him answer, to **understand** what He would say—this is his heart's desire and prayer. He will not be the less but the more a servant of God if that perfect mutual understanding can be established which results from face-to-face and heart-to-heart communion.

6 **Nay; but he would give heed unto me.** These words measure the progress of Job's thoughts of God. On two former occasions (9^{34} 13^{21}), when he expressed his desire to meet with God, he almost regretted his audacity; for he had the secret dread, born of all the calamities which had come crashing upon him, that, when the hour of meeting came, God would strike him dumb, either dazzling him with the glory of His majesty or overwhelming him with the terrors of His might. As he recalls his earlier fears, he cannot help asking still, 'Would He contend with me in the greatness of His power?' but he now answers his own question with an emphatic **Nay**. Having reasoned away his unworthy thoughts, and exorcised his haunting fears, of God, he is now confident that, when the meeting takes place, God will welcome him with a grace that will put him at his ease, and patiently hear him while he pours forth all that is in his heart. To the old Hebrew attributes of God, Job is thus adding the new attribute of fairness, mildness, clemency, sweet reasonableness (what the Greeks called ἐπιείκεια).

7 The LXX gives the second line a much better turn, **So should I for ever recover my right** (τὸ κρίμα μου, *i.e.* מִשְׁפָּטִי

instead of מִשְׁפָּטִי, the two words being the same in the unpunctuated Hebrew). Job asks for a trial, not in order that he may be delivered for ever from his Judge, but that he may hear his Judge vindicate his innocence and give him back his good name as an everlasting possession. From such a Judge he can have no desire to flee. To such a God he wishes to flee, as to a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

8, 9 **Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, etc.** These plaintive verses describe the speaker's patient, persistent, but futile search for God. He goes *east* and *west*, *north* and *south* (so the words should probably be translated, cf. 18²⁰), and finds that while He is everywhere operative He is always elusive. The seeker does not say (like Faber), 'He hides Himself most wondrously, as if there were no God.' Nothing could be farther from his thoughts, for the all-pervasive working of Omnipotence is overwhelmingly evident to him. What he does in effect say is, 'He reveals Himself most strangely, as if He were not good.' It is not the non-existence of God that is dreaded, but the possibility that He is non-moral; not atheism, but Manicheism; not the empty Eye-socket of Richter's apologue, but an awful Evil Eye. It is impossible not to ask if all the moral confusion of the world is the self-manifestation of a righteous God. The most pathetic thing in the world is the search of man for a God after his own heart. A quest so sincere and so unwearied is the best evidence that man is naturally and eternally religious. 'Thou couldst not seek Me at all, unless thou hadst already found Me.' Budde and Duhm both regard this quatrain as the work of a later hand, suggested perhaps by v.³. It seems to break the sense, for v.¹⁰ naturally follows v.⁷. But its intrinsic value is not affected by its date and authorship.

10 **When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.** Job is not speaking of the refining effect of suffering, and there is no evidence that such a thought (which is elaborated by Elihu) ever occurred to him. What the Heb. word for 'try' (בָּחַן) suggests is the testing, first of metals, and then of characters (cf. Jer 11²⁰ 17¹⁰). Job is placed in circumstances in which it is impossible to have any false humility; he knows his own moral worth, and asserts that, when the Assayer tries him, He

will find not dross, but gold. The whole verse is one of Job's most characteristic utterances, expressing his ineradicable sense of God's righteousness (which has been so often questioned by himself), as well as of his own (which has been so often questioned by others). His good conscience is the foundation of his faith in the goodness of the universe. Sure of himself, he is again becoming 'very sure of God.'

11, 12 **My foot hath held fast to his steps.** In a great variety of ways Job affirms his unwavering loyalty to his ethical ideal, which is the will of God. He has **held fast** to His steps, he has **kept** His way. Even when he has doubted God, he has never doubted goodness, never relaxed his hold of the moral law or questioned its eternal validity. This tenacity has been his salvation. Compare one of the most remarkable passages in modern literature, in which Frederick Robertson, after describing his own time of painful doubt, says: 'In that fearful loneliness of spirit . . . I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scathless; it is by holding fast to those things which are still certain—the grand, simple landmarks of morality. In the darkest hour through which a human soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain. If there be no God, and no future state, yet, even then it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be true than false, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be brave than a coward. . . . Thrice blessed is he who, when all is drear and cheerless, within and without, . . . has obstinately clung to moral good. Thrice blessed, for *his* night shall pass into clear bright day.'[1] The LXX improves 12^{a} by reading 'from his commandment' (without 'of his lips'), and 12^{b} by giving 'in my bosom' instead of 'more than my necessary food' (מֵחֻקִּי for בְּחֻקִּי).

13, 14 **But he is in one *mind*.** Many attempts have been made to explain the curious phrase 'in one' (בְּאֶחָד), 'mind' being inserted. It has, *e.g.*, been supposed to mean unchangeable in His resolution, or to assert the unity of God and His sole and absolute authority. But what the parallelism requires is a verb corresponding to **desireth**, and, as the word for 'in one' is very like that for 'he chooseth' (בָּחַר), many scholars read, **But he**

[1] *Life and Letters*, by Stopford Brooke, p. 55.

hath chosen, and who can turn him? Job broods on this thought, expressing it in a variety of ways, till the God of conscience again fades into the mysterious God of providence, the Lord of the world, the Sovereign of human lives, arbitrary, absolute, irresponsible, who doeth **what his soul desireth.** The doctrine of the divine decrees always obsesses Job's mind like a nightmare, arresting his freedom of thought and action, making him helpless and hopeless in the grip of an overmastering necessity. He has not yet been able to relate God's sovereignty to His love. There is a singular pathos in the simple words, **And many such things are with him**—divines would say, hidden in the unfathomable depths of His mind—such things as decrees of fire and sword, disaster and death, issued against Job's own innocent family, and against how many more!

15, 16 Job frankly confesses that, as he thinks of God, he is agitated in His presence, he is **afraid** of Him. God has again made his heart **faint**, the Almighty has troubled him. The one thing he sees clearly is that **God**—with an emphasis on the word—is resolved to afflict himself and other innocent men; and so long as affliction is interpreted as punishment, his spirit is tortured, for to be perplexed with those we love—and especially with the God whom we love—doth work like madness in the brain. The word for **when I consider** (Hithp. אֶתְבּוֹנֵן) suggests the figure of a man rapt in solemn thought, brooding on mysteries which baffle the finite mind, like Michelangelo's 'Il Penseroso.'

17 Many scholars agree that the only way to make sense of this verse, where the LXX differs considerably from the Hebrew, is to leave out the negative. Bickell translates,

> 'For I am annihilated by the darkness,
> And gloom enwrappeth my face.'

XXIV. 1–25.

POVERTY AND CRIME.

1 [1]Why are times not laid up by the Almighty?
And why do not they which know him see his days?
2 There are that remove the landmarks;
They violently take away flocks, and feed them.

3 They drive away the ass of the fatherless,
They take the widow's ox for a pledge.
4 They turn the needy out of the way:
The [2]poor of the earth hide themselves together.
5 Behold, as wild asses in the desert
They go forth to their work, seeking diligently for [3]meat;
The wilderness *yieldeth* them food for their children.
6 They cut [4]their provender in the field;
And they glean the vintage of the wicked.
7 They lie all night naked without clothing,
And have no covering in the cold.
8 They are wet with the showers of the mountains,
And embrace the rock for want of a shelter.
9 There are that pluck the fatherless from the breast,
And [5]take a pledge of the poor:
10 *So that* they go about naked without clothing,
And being an-hungred they carry the sheaves;
11 They make oil within the walls of these men;
They tread *their* winepresses, and suffer thirst.
12 From out of the [6]populous city men groan,
And the soul of the wounded crieth out:
Yet God imputeth it not for folly.
13 These are of them that rebel against the light;
They know not the ways thereof,
Nor abide in the paths thereof.
14 The murderer riseth with the light, he killeth the poor and needy;
And in the night he is as a thief.
15 The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight,
Saying, No eye shall see me:
And he [7]disguiseth his face.
16 In the dark they dig through houses:
[8]They shut themselves up in the day-time;
They know not the light.
17 For the morning is to all of them as the shadow of death;
For they know the terrors of the shadow of death.
18 [9]He is swift upon the face of the waters;
Their portion is cursed in the earth:
He turneth not by the way of the vineyards.
19 Drought and heat [10]consume the snow waters:
So doth [11]Sheol *those which* have sinned.
20 The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him;
He shall be no more remembered:
And unrighteousness shall be broken [12]as a tree.

21 He devoureth the barren that beareth not;
And doeth not good to the widow.
22 [13]He draweth away the mighty also by his power:
He riseth up, and no man is sure of life.
23 *God* giveth them to be in security, and they rest thereon;
[14]And his eyes are upon their ways.
24 They are exalted; yet a little while, and they are gone;
[15]Yea, they are brought low, they are [16]taken out of the way as all other,
And are cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.
25 And if it be not so now, who will prove me a liar,
And make my speech nothing worth?

[1] Or, *Why is it, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, that they which know him see not his days?*
[2] Or, *meek* [3] Heb. *prey.* [4] Or, *his*
[5] Or, *take in pledge that which is on the poor*
[6] Heb. *city of men.* [7] Or, *putteth a covering on his face*
[8] Or, Which *they had marked for themselves*
[9] Or, Ye say, *He is &c.* [10] Heb. *violently take away.*
[11] Or, *the grave* [12] Or, *as a tree; even he that devoureth &c.*
[13] Or, *Yet* God *by his power maketh the mighty to continue: they rise up, when they believed not that they should live*
[14] Or, *But* [15] Or, *And when they are &c.*
[16] Or, *gathered in*

This chapter presents very marked peculiarities, its form and contents being alike surprising. The Hebrew text is in a bad condition, and the divergences of the LXX are unusually great. Three-line stanzas (in general) take the place of the ordinary distichs and quatrains. The style and tone of the piece are not those of the dramatist, and in lieu of a single connected speech the reader receives a number of poetic fragments, descriptive of outcasts from society, murderers, adulterers, and thieves. It can scarcely be supposed that the poet would adduce such vague generalities as evidence of the divine misgovernment of the world. After his brilliant description of the prosperity of the wicked (ch. 21), we expect him to give an equally effective delineation of the sufferings of the righteous. It has been very plausibly suggested[1] that the chapter is a safe, and, of course, a comparatively feeble, substitute for Job's real speech, which at this point was too daring to be preserved. Some pious reader, who had the original text before him, said to himself, 'This is not food for babes, nor even for strong men,' and cancelled

[1] First by Merx in 1871.

what was probably one of the most extraordinary chapters of the drama, inserting between the first verse and the last a series of sketches which, if not particularly edifying, are at any rate harmless. In 24^{1} Job launches forth with two characteristic 'whys,' and in 24^{25} he challenges any one to prove him a liar. In point of fact no one would feel in the least disposed to impugn the accuracy of the facts which are now set before us, though many might question their cogency. Certainly Job needed have no fear that, at the end of such a speech, Bildad or Zophar would leap forward and call him a liar. But it is highly probable that in the original poem the speaker gave a lifelike description of the afflictions of the righteous, somewhat in the manner of Is 53, not, however, pervaded by the peace of an accepted sorrow, or illuminated by a doctrine of vicarious sacrifice which transfigured suffering and made it sublime, but conceived in a spirit of tragic realism which at once deepened the inexplicable mystery of pain, and directly or indirectly imputed injustice to the Judge of all the earth. It was then that Job felt the need of challenging his hearers to dispute his veracity or to prove his speech 'nothing worth.'

1 **Why are times not laid up by the Almighty?** The speaker's complaint is that the Almighty, as the Ruler and Judge of the earth, has not fixed times—days of assize—for the trial and punishment of offenders. Duhm thinks that in the second line we should read, 'Why do not they that know Him see His day' (יוֹמוֹ instead of יְמֵי)? and suggests that the reference is to His *parousia*, His day of wrath, in which the wicked shall be exterminated. But the times of recompense here contemplated may be more general.

2–4 The first fragment describes a series of outrages perpetrated by powerful and wealthy landowners upon their poor and unprotected neighbours. They remove the sacred **landmarks**—stones set up in an unhedged and unfenced country to define property—and encroach on the holding which the peasant proprietor has inherited from his ancestors. That this species of violence and fraud was common is indicated by the ancient law, 'Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people said, Amen!' (Dt 27^{17}), as well as by many other allusions (*e.g.* Dt 19^{14}, Hos 5^{10}, Pr 22^{28}). On

some paltry pretext, the rich man takes by force his neighbour's flock, and is shameless enough to graze it openly as his own. The LXX has the reading, 'They take away flocks and their shepherds,' but the Heb. is better. As security for a petty loan, or in distraint for debt, the oppressor drives away the orphan's ass, his single beast of burden, or the widow's only cow, on whose milk her children live. Evicted from land and home, the poor are turned adrift, and compelled to huddle together, nobody knows where or cares how, in utter destitution.

5–8 These verses describe a class of nameless pariahs—different from those just mentioned—aborigines driven by a stronger race from the land that once was theirs, grown wild as asses of the desert, compelled to live as hunters or freebooters, lying half-naked in the cold nights, and exposed by day to the drenching mountain rains, with no better refuge than the clefts of rocks.

5 **They go forth to their work.** 'To their work' cannot be right, and is apparently a marginal insertion. Perhaps 'to the wilderness' (see next line) was the original reading. In [5c] 'not' should probably be read for 'them' (לֹא for לוֹ). The whole then runs, 'Behold, as wild asses of the desert, They go forth to the steppe, seeking diligently for their prey: Their children have no bread.' For 'children' (נְעָרִים), Duhm proposes to read 'outcasts' (נִנְעָרִים or נֶעָרִים); but this is unnecessary.

6 For **their** (Heb. his) **provender** the LXX has 'that which is not his.' Merx makes the excellent suggestion, 'They reap **by night** in the field' (בַּלַּיְלָה for בְּלִילוֹ). In 6[2] Budde and Duhm read, 'And they glean the vintage of the rich,' instead of 'the wicked' (עָשִׁיר for רָשָׁע).

7, 8 These verses paint a pathetic picture, comparable to to one in *King Lear*:

> 'Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these?'

9 This verse refers to the inhuman creditor who snatches the deceased debtor's child from the widow's breast. With a

different pointing of the first word of [9b] (עֲל for עַל), some propose to read, 'And take in pledge **the suckling** of the poor,' which gives the proper parallelism with [9a]. The verse is here out of place, and should evidently stand after v.[4].

10, 11 These verses do not continue the description of the pariahs, but rather introduce still another class of unfortunates —poor, scantily-clad day-labourers, who hunger and thirst even when they are carrying sheaves, pressing oil, and treading the wine-press; starving in the midst of plenty, because their rapacious masters—the 'sweaters' of ancient times—refuse, though corn and oil and wine abound, to give them a living wage.

12 Here the LXX gives a better reading, 'From city and houses are they driven, And the soul of the children crieth aloud' (בָּתִּים, houses, being read for מְתִים, men, and עוֹלָלִים, children, for חֲלָלִים, wounded). In [12c] Duhm proposes, 'But there is none to plead for them.'

13–17 Another poetical fragment describes the crimes of night-prowlers—murderers, adulterers, and house breakers.

14 Each clause of this tristich requires some emendation. For 'The murderer riseth with the light' read, 'riseth when there is no light' (לֹא אוֹר for לָאוֹר), or 'in the evening' (לָעֶרֶב). As it is unlikely that he would rise to kill 'the poor and needy,' Duhm suggests 'his adversary and foe' (צָרוֹ for עָנִי, and אֹיְבוֹ for אֶבְיוֹן). In [14b] many read (with Merx), 'And in the night the thief roams about' (יְהִי כַגַּנָּב instead of יְהַלֵּךְ גַּנָּב).

15 The adulterer **disguiseth his face.** 'The mask was perhaps never known in Palestine and Syria. . . . The poet means that the adulterer, in order to remain undiscovered, wears women's clothes (cf. Dt 22^5); and, in fact, in the Syrian towns (the figure is taken from town life) women's clothing is always chosen for that kind of forbidden nocturnal adventure; *i.e.* the man disguises himself in an *îzâr*, which covers him from head to foot, takes the *mendîl* (veil), and goes with a lantern (without which at night every person is seized by the street watchman as a suspicious person) unhindered into a strange house.'[1]

[1] Wetzstein in Delitzsch, ii. 30.

16 **In the dark they dig through houses.** The transition to burglars is abrupt. In the East it is easy to break through the walls of houses, which are often built of clay (cf. Mt 6^{20}). As ^{16c} is too short and ^{17a} too long, transfer 'all of them' to ^{16c}, reading, 'For all of them know not the light.'

17 Here the text cannot be sound, for the repetition of 'the shadow of death' is impossible; and why should the darkness have terrors for the housebreaker? Reading 'they have chosen' for 'morning' (בָּחֲרוּ for בֹּקֶר) and 'paths' for 'terrors' (חֲלָכוֹת for בַּלְהוֹת), Duhm suggests, 'They have chosen for themselves the midnight, And they are acquainted with the ways of darkness.' ^{18a} may be added, 'Swift even upon the face of the waters,' perhaps the waters of the Nile and its canals, the scene of a kind of nightly activity which seemed to the Jews uncanny.

18–21 These verses describe some notorious evil-doer, who is sent to his doom in a manner that would thoroughly satisfy the three friends. Davidson suggests that the passage is a piece of irony on Job's part; but the ironical flavour is not perceptible, and it is better to regard the fragment as the most conventional part of a safe chapter which has been substituted for Job's heretical and dangerous attack upon providence. The oscillation between the sing. and the plur. is one of many indications that the text is in confusion.

19 Siegfried puts asterisks to indicate that he despairs of deciphering the text. With drastic emendations Duhm gets the reading, 'Accursed is his portion in the land; Drought and heat consume it, Snow waters wash it away.'

20 The first two lines should probably run, 'The square of his native place shall forget him, His greatness shall be remembered no more' (רֹחַב מְקֹמוֹ being substituted for רַחֵם מְתָקוֹ, and רְמֹה, his greatness, for רִמָּה, a worm). In ^{20c} Duhm suggests, 'He shall be uprooted like a rotten tree.'

21 This verse and ^{22a} seem to form a tristich. Instead of 'the mighty' (אַבִּירִים), the LXX has 'the perishing' (אֹבְדִים). Duhm reads, 'He doeth not good to the widow, And pitieth not her child; And carrieth off the perishing by his power.'

^{22b}, 23 For 'He riseth up' (יָקוּם) Bickell reads, 'He is

punished' (יִקָּם), and with other changes Duhm gets the tristich, 'He is punished, and is not sure of his life; He is thrown down, with no hope of rising again; And his oppressor is on his way.'

24 Here the Heb. text is very strange. With the help of the LXX one may read, 'His greatness (*τὸ ὕψωμα αὐτοῦ*) lasts a little while, and he is gone; He is brought low and withers like the mallow (מַלּוּחַ, *μολόχη*), And is cut off like the top of the corn-ear.'

25 **who will prove me a liar?** With no part of this speech would any of Job's friends feel much inclined to quarrel, and to the closing part of it each of them could certainly respond with a hearty Amen. It was some entirely different oration that prompted the speaker to end with this tremendous challenge. And it is perfectly clear that, from Job's own point of view, the speech that is now put into his mouth is, if not exactly **nothing worth**, at least not very relevant.

XXV. 1–XXVI. 14.

THE GREATNESS OF GOD.

1 Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
2 Dominion and fear are with him;
He maketh peace in his high places.
3 Is there any number of his armies?
And upon whom doth not his light arise?
4 How then can man be just [1]with God?
Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?
5 Behold, even the moon hath no brightness,
And the stars are not pure in his sight:
6 How much less man, that is a worm!
And the son of man, which is a worm!

XXVI. 1 Then Job answered and said,
2 How hast thou helped him that is without power!
How hast thou saved the arm that hath no strength!
3 How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom,
And plentifully declared sound knowledge!
4 To whom hast thou uttered words?
And whose [2]spirit came forth from thee?

5 [3]They that are deceased tremble
Beneath the waters and the inhabitants thereof.
6 [4]Sheol is naked before him,
And [5]Abaddon hath no covering.
7 He stretcheth out the north over empty space,
And hangeth the earth [6]upon nothing.
8 He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds;
And the cloud is not rent under them.
9 He closeth in the face of his throne,
And spreadeth his cloud upon it.
10 He hath described a boundary upon the face of the waters,
Unto the confines of light and darkness.
11 The pillars of heaven tremble
And are astonished at his rebuke.
12 He [7]stirreth up the sea with his power,
And by his understanding he smiteth through [8]Rahab.
13 By his spirit the heavens are [9]garnished;
His hand hath pierced the [10]swift serpent.
14 Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways:
And [11]how small a whisper [12]do we hear of him!
But the thunder of his [13]power who can understand?

[1] Or, *before*
[2] Heb. *breath.*
[3] Or, *The shades* Heb. *The Rephaim.*
[4] Or, *The grave*
[5] Or, *Destruction*
[6] Or, *over*
[7] Or, *stilleth*
[8] See ch. 9^{13}.
[9] Heb. *beauty.*
[10] Or, *fleeing* Or, *gliding*
[11] Or, *how little a portion*
[12] Or, *is heard*
[13] Or, *mighty deeds*

Whilst Bildad's brief utterance in 25^{2-6} has no proper beginning, and part of it is a mere variation on passages from Eliphaz, the panegyric of God's majesty and power in ch. 26 cannot with any dramatic consistency be ascribed to Job, for the divine greatness is throughout the poem the special theme of the friends, and, though never questioned by Job, is always regarded by him as an irrelevancy. No satisfactory reason can be given for making him in the end imitate and gratify his friends by sounding such notes of praise. To say that he takes up Bildad's truism and illustrates it with a freedom and fulness beyond Bildad's power,[1] or that he proves himself to be full of that which Bildad is anxious to teach him,[2] or that he rivals Bildad in magnifying God's greatness,[3] is unconvincing. It is probable that the whole of chs. 25 and 26 belongs to Bildad, and that the present disorder is due to the error of a scribe who,

[1] Cox. [2] Delitzsch. [3] Davidson.

chancing to omit 25^{2-6}, set it down in the margin, from which later copyists restored it to the text, not, however, in its proper place (after 26^{4}), but at the beginning of the speech.

Ironically admiring the wisdom and might with which Job has been able to counsel and aid the Creator, Bildad wonders whence he can have derived his inspiration. Then becoming serious, and rising to a singularly lofty strain, he glorifies the sovereign, awe-inspiring power of God, the peace He has established in heaven, the number of His armies, and the universality of His dominion, which extends even to the trembling Rephaim in Sheol. The earth suspended over empty space, the rain-laden clouds, the earth-encircling ocean, the divided light and darkness, the thunder-shaken mountains, the smitten sea-dragon, the pierced cloud-serpent, all display the magnitude of His power. Yet it is but the fringe of His garment that is seen, the faint whisper of His voice that is heard. The thunder of His power is beyond human comprehension.

XXVI. 2, 3 **How hast thou helped him that is without power!** Bildad praises Job for coming to the aid of God, who, being without power and wisdom, sorely needed the benefit of such a man's **sound knowledge.** The meaning which underlies the raillery is that Job is guilty of the incredible folly of thinking himself wiser than God; just as Job has taxed his friends with pretending to teach God (21^{22}). On neither side, of course, has such an astounding claim been expressly made, but alike in the dogmatism of the friends and in the criticism of Job there is that which lends a certain colour to the indictment.

4 **To whom** (אֶת־מִי) **hast thou uttered words?** Better, 'By whose help' (אֵת being a preposition, not the accus. mark). We thus get a perfect parallel to the second line, 'And whose spirit came forth from thee?' If the spirit of counsel and might, which animates ordinary mortals, is the gift of God, then whose spirit has animated Job, the superman who is able to give lessons to God?

XXV. 2 In proceeding to laud the dominion of God, Bildad adheres to the assumption which is made by the friends throughout the debate—that the best way to establish the righteousness of God is to prove His omnipotence. **Dominion**

and fear form a hendiadys—an awe-inspiring sovereignty is His. He rules not only on earth, where some rebels presume to judge His conduct, but in His high (or heavenly) places, where He has far greater powers to dominate. The **peace** which He made in heaven was the result of His victory over the chaos-monsters that rose against Him in the beginning of time (cf. vv.[12. 13] of ch. 26, and 9^{13} 21^{22}, Is $24^{21. 22}$).

3 God's **armies,** which are essential to His dominion, are the innumerable stars, which, being regarded as animated and called by names (Is 40^{26}), are often identified with the angels. **His light** is not the light of the sun, but God's own essential light, far-darting and all-penetrating. The Heb. text, however, can scarcely have been written by the poet (it has the form אוֹרֵהוּ instead of אוֹרוֹ), and the LXX must have read the word for 'His ambush' (אֹרְבוֹ, *ἔνεδρα παρ' αὐτοῦ*), which Duhm prefers. Siegfried suggests 'His law' (תּוֹרָתוֹ).

4–6 These verses are taken, with slight variations, from Eliphaz's second speech (15^{14-16}, cf. 4^{17-21}). Bildad's argument is that, if God is purer than the loftiest and brightest of His creatures—the moon and the stars—He is infinitely purer than base, earth-born man, a **worm** of the dust. In v.[6] two Heb. words (רִמָּה and תוֹלֵעָה) are both translated 'worm.' Luther has 'ein Mensch, die Made (maggot), und ein Menschenkind, der Wurm.'

XXVI. 5 **They that are deceased tremble.** Better, 'The giants writhe in pain.' The verb (impf. Po'lal) is very strong. The Rephaim (LXX *γίγαντες*) are not the shades of men, but the giants who, like the Titans of the Greeks, rebelled against God in the primeval chaos and were cast down to Sheol. In 2 S $5^{18. 22}$ the LXX calls the Valley of the Rephaim the Valley of the Titans (*τῶν Τιτάνων*). Only in late literature is the term applied to the dead in Sheol (*e.g.* Is 14^{9} 26^{14}, Ps 88^{10}). In the second line Bickell reads, 'Who have their dwellings (מְשֻׁבָנֵיהֶם for וְשֹׁכְנֵיהֶם) beneath the waters.' The mention of the fishes of the sea—'the waters and the inhabitants thereof'—in such a connection is improbable.

6 **Sheol is naked before him, And Abaddon hath no**

covering. Abaddon (from אָבַד, to perish) is a synonym of Sheol, the place or state of the dead, and is almost confined to the Wisdom literature. In the LXX it is always rendered by ἀπώλεια; in Eng. by 'destruction' when it is conjoined with 'death' (28^{22}) or 'the grave' (Ps 88^{11}). The name naturally indicates the darker aspects of the state of the dead; but one may doubt if here, or anywhere in the OT, 'it is specialised, and indicates the state of the lost in Sheol,'[1] though it is true that the Targum on the present text interprets it as 'the house of perdition.' In Rev 9^{11} Abaddon is the angel of the abyss, who 'in the Greek tongue hath the name Apollyon.'

7 **He stretcheth out the north over empty space.** Probably 'the north' (צָפוֹן) is not the northern sky and its constellations, but the northern region of the earth, the poet (as the parallelism implies) apparently naming the part for the whole. For the later Hebrews 'the north' (as for the earlier 'the south') was surrounded with mystery, being known to them from the time of the Exile as the region of vast mountains and the birth-place of majestic thunderstorms (Is 14^{13}, Ezk 1^{4}). The idea that the earth is stretched **over empty space**—that it is hung **upon nothing**—is a commonplace to modern science; but its presence in the Book of Job indicates a great progress in Jewish speculation. And, since all natural phenomena are 'miracles' in the original sense of the word (נִפְלָאוֹת, 5^{9}), in that they fill the mind with religious wonder and awe, the poet's writing is saturated with what is now called cosmic emotion.

8 **And the cloud is not rent.** The cloud is figured as a great full water-skin, which, if it were suddenly rent, would deluge the ground. That it does not burst beneath its burden, but distils in soft refreshing showers, is a proof of God's skill and power.

9 **He closeth in the face of his throne**: *i.e.* clouds surround it and conceal it from human eyes. But the word translated 'closeth in' (מְאַחֵז) does not elsewhere bear this meaning. With a different punctuation the word for face (פְּנֵי) means pillars (פַּנֵּי), and one may read **he setteth fast the pillars of his**

[1] Charles, Hastings' *DB* i. 3.

throne, *i.e.* the mountains that bear up the heaven, which is His throne (cf. v.[11]). Over the heaven He then **spreadeth his cloud** (עֲנָנוֹ, cloud-mass, specially used of a theophanic cloud) as the curtain of His throne.

10 **Unto the confines of light and darkness.** The earth is regarded in Hebrew cosmogony as a disk floating on an ocean called the Great Deep (Tĕhōm). Upon this ocean the arch of the sky comes down, making a boundary within which all is light, and beyond which primeval darkness still reigns.

11 **The pillars of heaven** are the great mountains which support the dome of the sky. They **tremble** and **are astonished** at God's rebuke, the thunder and its reverberations being regarded as the voice of His wrath.

12 **He stirreth up the sea.** As Bildad probably refers to the primeval conflict with rebel powers (see notes on 7^{12} 9^{13}), we should regard the tenses as historical pasts, and read, 'He stirred up the sea by His power, And by His understanding He smote through Rahab.' The idea is that He incited the dragon to battle; but His majestic power, which is Bildad's theme, would be displayed rather (as in the parallel clause) by the quelling than the enraging of a hostile power; and the LXX reads **he stilled** (*κατέπαυσεν*). The Heb. word (רָגַע) has both meanings.

13 **his spirit,** *i.e.* the wind, blows away the storm-clouds, and **the heavens are garnished,** the sky is fair, lit. fairness (שִׁפְרָה). The use of the abstract noun is peculiar, and some prefer the LXX reading, 'The bars of heaven (*κλεῖθρα οὐρανοῦ*, *i.e.* בְּרִיחֵי שָׁמַיִם instead of בְּרוּחוֹ) shudder at Him'; but animated bars are difficult to imagine, and the Heb. text affords a better parallel to [13b]. **The swift** (or **fleeing**) **serpent** (cf. Is 27^{1}), called leviathan in Job 3^{8}, is the cloud-dragon which threatened to plunge the cosmos back into chaos.

14 **Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways.** God's working, says the speaker, as he reviews his illustrations of it, is a stupendous mystery. A garment of which we can only see the fringes, a voice of which we can hear but the faint whisper (שֶׁמֶץ דָּבָר, a murmur of a word),—that is how we vaguely think of it. But how much lies beyond the visible and the audible!

If God were to manifest Himself as He is, what ears could bear the thunder of His power? What imagination can conceive it? For metrical reasons Duhm cancels [14c], which he regards as the well-meaning addition of a thoughtful reader. Few lines in the poem, however, would be sacrificed with greater reluctance, and one would rather suggest that the third line of a quatrain has been lost, and read, 'But the glory of His majesty who may behold? And the thunder of His power who can understand?' The familiar argument of the friends, whom the poet allows to do it ample justice, is here restated in language of matchless sublimity. God is incomprehensibly great, therefore mortal man must not presume either to criticise or complain of His government of the world, silence and submission being the sum of wisdom. In the same way the Moslem closures the discussion of all difficult problems with the words 'Allah akbar!' 'God is great!' To Job, on the contrary, divine sovereignty is an unquestionable, but an unprofitable, fact. His heart-cry is not for a greatness appalling his littleness, or a wisdom abashing his ignorance, but a goodness excelling all human goodness. In particular, he would fain know that, although he is a leper, God is not angry with him, and will one day tell him so. 'Impossible!' say his friends, and, when he murmurs at God's cruelty, they answer him with panegyrics on the thunder of His power. As poetical presentments of their creed, their pæans are magnificent; but if 'through the darkness came a human voice, saying, O heart I made, a heart beats here,' the truth would suddenly flash upon them that the greatest thing in the world is not greatness. Then their old creed would fall into ruins, and they would begin to build again on a new foundation.

XXVII. 1–6.

THE REASSERTION OF INTEGRITY.

1 And Job again took up his parable, and said,
2 As God liveth, who hath taken away my right;
And the Almighty, who hath [1]vexed my soul;
3 [2](For my life is yet whole in me,
And the spirit of God is in my nostrils;)

4 Surely my lips [3]shall not speak unrighteousness,
Neither [4]shall my tongue utter deceit.
5 God forbid that I should justify you:
Till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me.
6 My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go:
My heart [5]shall not reproach *me* so long as I live.

[1] Heb. *made my soul bitter.*
[2] Or, *All the while my breath is in me . . . nostrils; surely*
[3] Or, *do* [4] Or, *doth*
[5] Or, *doth not reproach* me for *any of my days*

The first six verses of ch. 27, and probably v.[12], are rightly ascribed to Job. Here he asseverates by the living God that he will maintain his innocence as long as he lives. In the rest of the chapter, however, the speaker, whoever he may be, categorically denies all that Job has ever said of the prosperity of the wicked, and, in the lurid language of which the friends are past masters, describes the fate of the ungodly, a fate similar to that which has overtaken Job's children. As it certainly is not Job's rôle to preach retribution, and as Zophar requires to speak once more in order that the third cycle of the Dialogues may be completed, it is natural to ascribe this part of the chapter to the youngest disputant, in whose style it is certainly conceived. See Introd. p. 26.

1 The unusual exordium, 'And Job again took up his parable,' at once awakens suspicion. The ordinary formula, 'Then Job answered and said' (26[1]), has been removed from here owing to the mistaken ascription of ch. 26 to Job, and should be restored.

2–4 **As God liveth, etc.** These verses contain the most extraordinary form of oath to be found in the Scriptures. Job affirms by the life of God, *who has wronged him*, and by the Almighty, who has made his soul bitter, that he speaks nothing but the truth in asserting his innocence. Yet a man swears only by that which he regards as highest and holiest! All through the poem two conceptions of God struggle in Job's mind, and the result is often startling. His heart is fixed, whilst his intellectual beliefs are in a state of flux. He has an instinctive, intuitional faith which the facts of experience cannot shatter. His spiritual citadel is beyond the assaults of rationalism. 'Le cœur,' as

Pascal says, 'a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point, on le sait en mille choses.'[1]

3, 4 Two constructions are here possible. Either Job pauses to affirm parenthetically that, in spite of his disease, his **life is yet whole**,—meaning, especially, that his mind is unclouded,—and therefore he knows full well what his solemn oath implies; or he says, without parenthesis, 'So long as my breath is in me, And the spirit of God in my nostrils, Surely my lips,' etc. (marg.). Duhm thinks that v.[3], with its opening 'For,' finds its proper point of attachment after [5b], to which place he accordingly transfers it. The force of the language would be increased by the use of present instead of future tenses in [4a. b] and [6b].

5, 6 **God forbid that I should justify you.** Job would **justify** his friends—acknowledging them to be in the right—if he were to admit the charges which they have made against him. That he can never do. **My right . . . my integrity . . . my righteousness**—this constitutes his spiritual treasure, more precious than life itself. The egoism of the passage—**my** occurs eight times in six verses—is, all things considered, not only pardonable but heroic. Job is bribed by the promises, and bullied by the threats, of his friends to make confession of sin; he has the orthodox sentiment of a nation against him; and his body is wasted by disease. The temptation to see what can be done by humility is almost irresistible. But with a solemn oath—as if he required to do himself some violence—he flings it from him. So long as his spirit is erect and whole, he will never purchase human, nor even divine, favour by forgoing his integrity, renouncing his righteousness—an act of insincerity by which he would corrupt his conscience, destroy his manhood, and—strangest thought of all—incur the wrath of God. Therefore he cries, **God forbid . . . My righteousness I hold fast.** It is a striking fact that, in later Hebrew, the word which denotes '*righteousness* (צֶדֶק) as vindicated, *justification* in controversy with enemies and troubles,' means also 'victory' (*Oxf. Heb. Lex.*). But it is for righteousness, not for victory, that Job is contending.

12 **Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it.** These words look

[1] Pascal's *Pensées* (ed. Astié), p. 490.

like the conclusion of a speech in which Job has been maintaining his innocence. The remaining part of the *apologia* has been displaced by a speech in an entirely different strain. What astonishes Job is that his friends refuse to trust the evidence of their own senses. They have seen his innocence; but with them seeing is not believing, for their faith in God kills their faith in man's integrity. No wonder if their victim asks in sad impatience, 'Why are ye become altogether vain?' (cf. 21^{34}).

XXVII. 7–23.

THE END OF THE WICKED.

7 Let mine enemy be as the wicked,
And let him that riseth up against me be as the unrighteous.
8 For what is the hope of the godless, [1]though he get him gain,
When God taketh away his soul?
9 Will God hear his cry,
When trouble cometh upon him?
10 Will he delight himself in the Almighty,
And call upon God at all times?
11 I will teach you concerning the hand of God;
That which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.
12 Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it;
Why then are ye become altogether vain?
13 This is the portion of a wicked man with God,
And the heritage of oppressors, which they receive from the Almighty.
14 If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword;
And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.
15 Those that remain of him shall be buried in death,
And his widows shall make no lamentation.
16 Though he heap up silver as the dust,
And prepare raiment as the clay;
17 He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on,
And the innocent shall divide the silver.
18 He buildeth his house as the [2]moth,
And as a booth which the keeper maketh.
19 He lieth down rich, but he [3]shall not be gathered;
He openeth his eyes, and he is not.

20 Terrors overtake him like waters;
A tempest stealeth him away in the night.
21 The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth;
And it sweepeth him out of his place.
22 For *God* shall hurl at him, and not spare:
He would fain flee out of his hand.
23 Men shall clap their hands at him,
And shall hiss him out of his place.

[1] Or, *when God cutteth him off, when he taketh &c.*
[2] Some ancient versions have, *spider.*
[3] Some ancient versions have, *shall do so no more.*

It is probable that this passage should be headed with the words, 'Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said' (see p. 224). The speaker expresses the wish that his own enemy may share the fate of the ungodly, whose sickness is incurable, and whose prayer God does not hear. He enlarges on the misery of the wicked, whose children perish by sword, famine, and pestilence; whose wealth is given to the righteous; who is overtaken by terrors; and whom God, in anger and derision, drives and hisses out of his place.

7 **Let mine enemy be as the wicked.** The vindictive wish is characteristic of the hot-blooded Zophar, who obeys the law of nature, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy.' So sure is he that a terrible retribution is meted out to the wicked, that he could wish nothing else for his own enemy. He does not say his worst enemy, for apparently any degree of hostility to Zophar merits the severest punishment. Compare the Cushite's imprecation on the enemies of King David (2 S 18[32]).

8, 9 **For what is the hope of the godless?** The words 'when God cutteth him off' (marg.) are to be struck out as a gloss upon the next clause, 'when God taketh away.' The verb 'taketh away' really means 'draweth out,' and 'draweth out his soul' is meaningless; but with a very slight change (יִשְׁלֹ into יִשְׁאַל) Wellhausen reads, **when God requireth his soul.** Zophar asks what hope there is that the wicked will recover from sickness, and is assured that there is none. The words at the same time imply that the godly man has hope, not indeed of an after-life, but of recovery in case of sickness, and of prosperity till the natural close of a peaceful existence.

10 Whilst Zophar's theme is the portion of the wicked, the Heb. text of this verse puts a question as to the character, not the fate, of the ungodly. It is better to follow the LXX and Peshitto, which read, 'Will he obtain his desire of the Almighty? When he calls to Him, will He give heed to him?'

11 'I will teach you concerning the hand of God.' The strange Heb. text may be corrected by the aid of suggestions from the LXX. Read, **I will teach thee what is in the hand of God,** *i.e.* what God doeth, what are His ways. This suits the parallel line, 'That which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.' Whilst Zophar has often and strongly deprecated the speculative inquiries of impious minds, he knows and will not conceal the meaning of suffering; for here (he believes) he is moving in the realm, not of theories, but of facts, such as suit a practical mind like his. He therefore proceeds with his illustrations, each of which is meant to establish the old dogma, that between the cradle and the grave every man receives his due recompense, the evil-doer being visited with condign punishment. Even in this last cycle of the debate Eliphaz softens, relents, leaves open the door of hope and invites a penitent sinner to enter; but there is not a single wooing note in Zophar's wild and whirling words. As if the possibility of redemption and regeneration were past, ruin must be preached.

12 On this verse, see p. 225.

13 In the second line we should probably read **oppressor** and **he**, instead of 'oppressors' and 'they.' Note the sing., '*his* children,' in the following verse.

14 **If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword.** Those who assume that this is the teaching of Job are here in great straits. They have first to assume that he is retracting his own words. 'He *had* complained,' says one scholar, 'that the wicked "send forth their children like a flock" (21^{11}); he now confesses that, numerous as they may be, they are all "for the sword."'[1] Such exegesis stultifies Job, and, what is worse, it cannot avoid making him, a father who has lost his own children, speak of the similar losses of another (albeit an ungodly) man in an incredibly callous manner. This is not like the great humanist who gives expression to his noblest sentiments in the speeches

[1] Cox, p. 350.

of Job. But if the words in question are attributed to Zophar, everything is right and natural, neither dramatic canons nor ethical principles being violated.

15 **Buried in death**: better, **by death**. 'Death' means here, as often in the OT (Jer 15^2 18^{21} 43^{11}), the pestilence (cf. our 'black death'), which is the third of the historical scourges, war (^{14a}) and famine (^{14b}) being the first and second. The plague gives its victims the only burial they receive, as they are left lying where they die; and their widows are too stricken to think of the customary rites of mourning. **His widows** cannot be right, for the next verses represent him as still living. The LXX has **their widows**, the reference being to the widows of his sons who have fallen in the plague.

16, 17 If the ungodly man toils and amasses possessions in money and raiment, they soon pass, and in strict justice, to the godly. The **just** shall wear the fine robes, and the **innocent** divide the silver. Did not the pious Israelites spoil the Egyptian heathen? Without any spiritualising, the meek shall inherit the land (Ps 37^{11}). **Dust** and **clay** are emblems of an abundance to which even precious things are of small account (Zec 9^3).

18 **He buildeth his house like the moth.** Most scholars read, with the Syriac and the LXX, **as the spider** (ὥσπερ ἀράχνη, כָּעַכָּבִישׁ instead of כָּעָשׁ). The 'booth' is the flimsy structure erected on four poles to serve as an outlook for the watchman in the vineyard (Is 1^8 24^{20}).

19 The LXX gives a much better reading, 'He lieth down rich, but he shall **do so no more**' (implying a text יוֹסֵף instead of יֵאָסֵף). The second line, **He openeth his eyes, and he is not,** means that destruction comes upon the guilty man so suddenly, that scarcely has he opened his eyes to see it, when he closes them for ever.

20, 21 Working towards a climax, Zophar teaches that when a man's ways displease God the elements conspire to destroy him. Terrors overtake him 'by day' (Wright's יוֹמָם instead of כַּמַּיִם, 'like waters,' is very plausible), a tempest or storm-wind, the instrument of God's wrath (Ps 83^{16}), steals him away in the night, and an east wind whirls him (the strongest verb last) out of his place. 'Storms are rare during an east wind; they come

mostly with a west wind (never with a south or north wind). But if an east wind does bring a storm, it is generally very destructive, on account of its strong gusts; it will even uproot the largest trees.'[1]

22, 23 The greatest terror comes last. God Himself hurls (probably thunderbolts) at the sinner, and does not spare; out of His hand one cannot, though one fain would, flee; He claps His hands at the evil-doer (not, as men do in the West, to applaud, but as in the East, to express indignation, Nu 24[10], La 2[15]), and hisses at him, in derision, from His (heavenly) place; or, if this last interpretation is thought too bold, the meaning may be, hisses him out of his (earthly) place. There is no reason to change the subject of the last verse, as the RV follows the AV in doing, from God to the indefinite 'Men.' The God of Zophar does everything that Zophar would do in His place. That He should clap His hands in anger over an impenitent sinner, and hiss at him in scorn, is all quite natural. How often the poet had heard just such sentiments expressed in just such language! It is his purpose to hold up all this bad theology and crude anthropomorphism to eternal reprobation.

XXVIII. 1–28.

THE QUEST AFTER WISDOM.

1 [1]Surely there is a mine for silver,
And a place for gold which they refine.
2 Iron is taken out of the [2]earth,
And brass is molten out of the stone.
3 *Man* setteth an end to darkness,
And searcheth out to the furthest bound
The stones of thick darkness and of the shadow of death.
4 [3]He breaketh open a shaft away from where men sojourn;
They are forgotten of the foot *that passeth by*;
They hang afar from men, they [4]swing to and fro.
5 As for the earth, out of it cometh bread:
And underneath it is turned up as it were by fire.

[1] Wetzstein in Delitzsch, ii. 78.

6 The stones thereof are the place of sapphires,
[5]And it hath dust of gold.
7 That path no bird of prey knoweth,
Neither hath the falcon's eye seen it:
8 The [6]proud beasts have not trodden it,
Nor hath the fierce lion passed thereby.
9 He putteth forth his hand upon the flinty rock;
He overturneth the mountains by the roots.
10 He cutteth out [7]channels among the rocks;
And his eye seeth every precious thing.
11 He bindeth the streams [8]that they trickle not;
And the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.
12 But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?
13 Man knoweth not the price thereof;
Neither is it found in the land of the living.
14 The deep saith, It is not in me:
And the sea saith, It is not with me.
15 It cannot be gotten for [9]gold,
Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.
16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir,
With the precious [10]onyx, or the sapphire.
17 Gold and glass cannot equal it:
Neither shall the exchange thereof be [11]jewels of fine gold.
18 No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal:
Yea, the price of wisdom is above [12]rubies.
19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it,
Neither shall it be valued with pure gold.
20 Whence then cometh wisdom?
And where is the place of understanding?
21 Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living,
And kept close from the fowls of the air.
22 [13]Destruction and Death say,
We have heard a rumour thereof with our ears.
23 God understandeth the way thereof,
And he knoweth the place thereof.
24 For he looketh to the ends of the earth,
And seeth under the whole heaven;
25 [14]To make a weight for the wind;
Yea, he meteth out the waters by measure.
26 When he made a decree for the rain,
And a way for the lightning of the thunder:
27 Then did he see it, and [15]declare it;
He established it, yea, and searched it out.

28 And unto man he said,
Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
And to depart from evil is understanding.

[1] Or, *For* [2] Or, *dust*
[3] Or, *The flood breaketh out from where men sojourn*; even the waters *forgotten of the foot: they are minished, they are gone away from man*
[4] Or, *flit* [5] Or, *And he winneth lumps of gold*
[6] Heb. *sons of pride.* [7] Or, *passages* [8] Heb. *from weeping.*
[9] Or, *treasure* [10] Or, *beryl* [11] Or, *vessels*
[12] Or, *red coral* Or, *pearls* [13] Heb. *Abaddon.*
[14] Or, *When he maketh* [15] Or, *recount*

This fine poem, which can scarcely have formed a part of the original drama, gives lofty expression to the single idea that Wisdom or Reason—the personified Idea or Plan of the world—cannot be attained by man, who is for ever engaged in an ardent but apparently fruitless quest for it. In the drama this, or something like this, is one of the themes of the friends, but never of Job himself. Zophar not only regards divine wisdom as unsearchable,—higher than heaven, deeper than Sheol,—but deprecates the pursuit of it as an impious prying into sacred mysteries (11[7. 8]). Job, on the contrary, steadfastly refuses to accept the doctrine that man cannot understand the ways of God. Had he assimilated the teaching of the present chapter, he would have abandoned the hope of receiving a solution of the dark enigma of suffering; whereas, even to the end of his last speech in the debate with the friends, he continues to reiterate his old demand, 'Let the Almighty answer me' (31[35]). This poem is, therefore, in all probability an independent composition, inserted by a reader who believed it had a bearing on the problem of the drama, and who thus prevented a literary gem from being lost. Having read the original work, or read it thus far, without finding any light upon the mystery of God's government of the world, he introduces a poem which teaches man to acquiesce in a reverent agnosticism. 'The philosophical idea' of the poem 'rests on the conception of the νοῦς in the cosmos as the highest and most precious good, which man can neither achieve by labour nor purchase with gold, of which Nature, inanimate or living, knows nothing; it is the Reason which reigns in natural law, and which God studied and used when He created the world. The author was as certainly

acquainted with the Greek idea as Aristobulus or Philo, and may have lived in the third century B.C.'[1]

There is a quaint simplicity about the poem, almost as if it were written for children, to arouse their interest in a romantic adventure. Had the poet's imagination been able to range over a wider space and a later time, he might have used as illustrations the eager quest for the Golden Fleece, the Philosopher's Stone, the Holy Grail, or the no less eager search for the new world, the north-west passage, the Mountains of the Moon, the arctic and antarctic poles. But his ancient world is none the less poetical for being comparatively small. For the seeing eye there are as many wonders between Ophir and Ethiopia (vv.[16. 19]) as between China and Peru. Choosing his material with unerring judgment, and uttering his thoughts with unfailing art, this unknown poet appears to his readers as one of those writers who know that simplicity is the last expression of profundity.

1 Instead of 'Surely' read **For** (כִּי). Duhm ingeniously explains this strange opening by supposing that the piece began with the refrain, 'Where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?' (cf. vv.[12. 20]). This leads naturally enough to the words, **For there is a mine for silver.** The poet reflects that ores which lie deep in the earth are not beyond the reach of human effort and skill, that gems which are hidden in the darkness can be brought forth to flash in the light, and wonders if the quest for wisdom will be equally rewarded. The word for **mine** (מוֹצָא) is more general than ours, meaning the 'source' or 'spring' of anything (*e.g.* waters). There were ancient mines in Egypt, Arabia Petraea, North Gilead, the southern base of the Lebanon, and near Beirût. The poet knew enough of mining operations, either from personal observation or from report, to be able to give a vivid description of them. The statement of Dt 8[9], that the Israelites were going to possess 'a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass,' was true if 'land' was used in a wide sense; but there were no mines in Palestine proper. **And a place for gold which they refine.** Two terms are applied in the OT to the refining of ores; the one (זָקַק) means washing them

[1] Duhm, 134.

with water, the other (צָרַף) smelting them with fire. It is the former word that is used here. When God is figuratively called a 'Refiner' (Mal 3[2]), it is the latter term that is employed.

3 The multiplication of terms for darkness—there are three in the verse, the last being **the shadow of death**—deepens the impression of the weird obscurity into which the miner daily descends. If the first line, *Man* **setteth an end to darkness,** is correct, the meaning is that he penetrates the central gloom with his artificial light. But the Heb. is very strange, and the three-line stanza awakens suspicion as to the correctness of the text. With some changes, Duhm gets the normal distich, 'Man searcheth out the darkness to the utmost bound, Seeketh out the stones of thick darkness and the shadow of death.'

4 Beer calls this verse a *crux interpretum*. The second line is very curious as it stands, while 'away from where men sojourn' (מֵעִם־גָּר) and 'of the foot' (מִנִּי־רָגֶל) are probably variants, of which the second is much the better Hebrew. Beer reads, 'He breaketh open a shaft away under the foot, They that are forgotten of men swing to and fro.' In the first line Ley suggests 'away from the light' (נֵר instead of גָּר), and in the second Merx (followed by Duhm) would read, 'He hangs beneath, swinging on a rope' (בַּמֻּשָׁכָה).

5 The peaceful growth of the corn on the surface of the earth is contrasted with the wild turmoil in the mines underneath. In the second line, Jerome and some modern scholars read 'by fire' instead of 'as it were by fire' (בְּמוֹ for כְּמוֹ)—*Terra igni subversa est*—the reference in that case being to the blasting of rocks by fire.

6 **And it hath dust of gold.** The pronoun 'it' (לוֹ) is masc. and cannot mean 'the earth,' which is fem. The reference is to the sapphire, which is sometimes striated with gold, or rather with iron pyrites glittering like gold. This does not, however, apply to the true sapphire, but only to the lapis lazuli, which was often mistaken for it.

7 **That path no bird of prey knoweth.** To suppose, with most exegetes, that the path which the birds of prey do not know is the way to the mines, is too prosaic. Vv.[20. 21] prove

that it is the path of wisdom, or the place of understanding, that is 'kept close from the fowls of the air.' **The falcon's eye** is proverbially keen; the Talmud says that when she is in Babylon she sees a carcase in the land of Israel;[1] nevertheless the home of wisdom is beyond her farthest range of vision.

8 **The proud beasts,** lit. 'sons of pride' (cf. 41^{34}). Intrepid, sagacious, roaming the mountains and scouring the deserts at their will, they never come where wisdom dwells. As vv.[7. 8] interrupt the description of the miner's operations, it is probable that they have been misplaced in copying, and that they should stand after v.[12].

9 Such are man's courage and determination that **he puts forth his hand upon**—one might say 'takes in hand'—**the flinty rock**, properly the flint (חַלָּמִישׁ), a word used, however, more generally for any hard rock, such as the quartz in which gold is embedded. **He overturneth the mountains by the roots.** Pliny graphically describes the blasting operations of ancient miners (*H.N.* xxxiii. 21).

10, 11 If [10b] and [11a] are transposed, a perfect parallelism is secured in two couplets. 'He cutteth out channels among the rocks; He bindeth the streams that they trickle not. His eye seeth every precious thing, And the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to the light.' **Channels** (יְאֹרִים, an Egyptian word used of the Nile and its canals) may be courses made for the purpose of drawing off the water which threatens to flood the mine; more probably they are horizontal passages or galleries cut through the rocks by those who are seeking for ores and precious stones.

12 **But where shall wisdom be found?** The poet knows the effect of contrast. Having excited his reader's wonder and expectancy by describing the various powers and achievements of vision—the falcon's eye instantaneously descrying through the clear air the far-off prey; the human eye seeing, by the glimmer of a lamp, the glittering gold, or the flashing gem, that has lain hidden for ages in the heart of rocky mountains—he asks, But where shall any eye turn in the quest for wisdom?

13 Instead of 'Man knoweth not the price thereof' the LXX

[1] Talmud *b. Chullin*, 63^{b}, quoted by Delitzsch.

reads **the way thereof** (ὁδὸν αὐτῆς, דַּרְכָּהּ instead of עֶרְכָּהּ); and this is probably right, for as yet the point of interest is the abode of wisdom and the path which leads to it, **the price thereof** being dealt with in v.[15ff.]

14 **The deep saith, It is not in me.** 'Full many a gem of purest ray serene The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear'; but the pearl of great price is not to be found in the depths. As the word for **deep** (תְּהוֹם, the abyss, originally fem., here masc.) has still a mythical significance, we seem to hear the ancient rival of the God of light, the turbulent rebel who was subdued in the beginning of time, murmuring with his melancholy waves that he does not possess the secret of wisdom. To avoid an awkward repetition, for which the Hebrew is not to blame, read in [14b] 'And the sea saith, I have it not.'

15–19 Wisdom cannot be purchased at any price—cannot be weighed, valued, equalled, exchanged. If it could be put up for sale, what would not men give for it? Gold and silver, onyx and sapphire, coral and crystal, ruby and topaz—any or all of them would be offered for the coveted treasure. The poet uses the language of barter and exchange, and lays under contribution the wealth of the gorgeous East, which has always had a passion for jewels and precious stones, in order to illustrate one thought, not that wisdom is precious,—that does not need to be said,—but that it cannot be found. It is not to be 'gotten' where the merchants, brokers, and bankers meet to transact business. The demand for it cannot be supplied in any market. What is finely said of human love is equally true of divine wisdom —if a man would give all the substance of his house for it, that would be utterly contemned (Ca 8[7]). There is great difficulty in identifying the precious stones of this passage, and the ancient versions do not help us much. For 'onyx' (שֹׁהַם) we should perhaps read 'beryl' or 'malachite'; the 'sapphire' (סַפִּיר) is the lapis lazuli; 'coral' (רָאמוֹת) is only a guess; 'rubies' (פְּנִינִים) should probably be 'red corals'; and the 'topaz' (פִּטְדָה) may be either serpentine or the peridot.[1] The Hebrew language is rich in terms for gold, four of which are found in Job (three here

[1] See artt. 'Precious Stones' in Hastings' *DB* and *EBi.*

and one in 22^{24}) and others elsewhere, the distinctions being indicated in translation by such inadequate adjectives as 'fine,' 'pure,' 'bright,' 'yellow.'

20 **Whence then cometh wisdom?** By a process of elimination the ideal has been isolated from all the precious things which human fingers love to touch and human eyes to feast upon. And because it is no material good, it is all the more earnestly to be sought after. The whole chapter 'is a passionate personification of Wisdom, and the desire for her is almost sensuous in its intensity.'[1] Compare such exquisite passages as Pr $3^{13\text{-}18}$ $4^{5\text{-}9}$, where the pursuit of Wisdom is described in the language of love.

21 Since the keenest seekers for other things—the miner in the earth, the falcon in the air, the diver in the sea, the merchant in the bazaar—never by any chance come upon wisdom, the poet concludes that **it is hid from the eyes of all living**, whatever their powers of vision may be. 'Even if we unfurled all the sails of our knowledge, and embarked on the great ocean of facts, and if we flew on the wings of fancy to the summits of all being, we should not reach the limits where the mystery of infinity was revealed.'[2] The additional statement, **It is kept close from the fowls of the air**—a curious return to the birds (v.[7])—is probably due to the fact that they were supposed to have powers of divination. By their flights and cries they could foretell to man the future, but they could not show him the path of divine wisdom.

22 The deepest notes are struck towards the end of the poem. Turning from 'all living,' the reader waits for a reference to the dead, and is startled instead by those terrible figures—if shapes they be that shapes have none—**Destruction** (Heb. 'Abaddon,' a synonym for Sheol, ^{26b}) **and Death**, the powers that rule in the underworld; only to learn, however, that for all their might and majesty, they have only **heard a rumour** of wisdom, and have not attained it. Many moderns approach death with an immense curiosity to know what is beyond, convinced that 'there must be wisdom with great death';[3] but the Hebrews had no such feeling or expectation, the popular

[1] *Mark Rutherford*, 293.
[2] Bousset, *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 22 f.
[3] Tennyson.

belief being, on the contrary, that 'the dead know not any thing' (Ec 9[5]).

23 **God understandeth the way thereof.** The divine name, standing at the beginning of the Heb. sentence (where the verb usually stands), is very emphatic. God alone knows the way and the place of wisdom. To the modern mind this means that the Creator alone understands the scheme of creation. 'What an object the universe is to a creature, if there be a creature who can comprehend its system! But it must be an infinitely higher exercise of the understanding, to view the scheme of it in that mind which projected it, before the foundations were laid. And surely we have meaning to the words, when we speak of going further, and viewing, not only this system in His mind, but the wisdom and intelligence itself from which it proceeded.'[1] To the ancient poet, however, wisdom is more than an abstraction or an attribute, and, instead of consciously personifying an idea and playing with a rhetorical conceit, he almost, if not altogether, believes that Wisdom has an objective and independent existence,—a thought which is wonderfully elaborated in Pr 8[22-31].

24 **For he looketh to the ends of the earth.** These words seem to contradict what has been so explicitly said—that wisdom is not to be found anywhere on earth. Budde and Beer therefore regard the verse as an insertion, while Duhm thinks it would stand suitably after v.[11], the subject in that case being the treasure-seeker.

25–27 These verses should be so construed as to form a single sentence—the magnificent climax for which the whole poem has been preparing: 'When he made a weight for the wind, And meted out the waters by measure,' etc. **A weight for the wind** is its force—gentleness or violence—not what the phrase would naturally suggest nowadays—the atmospheric pressure. The Creator showed His wisdom in tempering the currents of the air. [26b] is the same as 38[25b], which proves that the writer was familiar with the work of the earlier and greater poet.

27 Read, **Then did he see it** (Wisdom) **and study it, He took it as a pattern, and also tested it.** Duhm thinks that the word (יספר) translated 'declare,' or 'recount' (marg.), neither of which

[1] Butler, *Analogy and Sermons* (Bell), 528 f.

gives a good sense, is a denominative from 'scribe' or 'student' (סוֹפֵר), and that (being the impf. Qal יִסְפֹּר, not the Piel יְסַפֵּר) it means **He studied.** The idea is that Wisdom was the model which the Divine Artist used in fashioning all things. One may call it either the ideal world or the world-idea—God's imagination of the universe projected and visualised before anything was made; but evidently the writer was groping after some higher truth, and, if he had been asked whether Wisdom was personal or impersonal, would have had difficulty in answering. He thus paves the way for both Philo Judaeus and St. John, the one of whom counted the Logos impersonal, the other personal.

28 **Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.** This conclusion is probably a later appendix, similar to 'the end of the matter' in Ecclesiastes (12^{13}). The Divine Wisdom, which the philosophical poet pursued so ardently and which men of science—thinking over again, as Kepler said, the Creator's thoughts—are now pursuing with an ever increasing ardour, suddenly presents herself as simple, homely Piety. It is evident, however, that if the fear of the Lord had been the poet's theme —the climax towards which he was working—he would have chosen other figures of speech than the miner's lamp and the falcon's eye. And if his moral is that after all a man needs only to fear God and eschew evil, since 'this is the true human philosophy, in contrast to all high-flown and profound speculation,'[1] he has failed to convince not only Philo and his school, but the author of the Fourth Gospel and the writers of the Epistles to the Colossians and the Hebrews. Such an interpretation does injustice to a writer whose intuition of an all-pervasive Reason is a sublime prophecy of the Christian view of the universe. If any fellow-Jew, convinced of the futility, if not also the profanity, of prying into mysteries, had suggested to him that the fear of Adonai is wisdom enough, he would not have denied it—in a sense he would have heartily agreed with it—but none the less he would have continued to study the *Timaeus*, and to elaborate his great conception of the Eternal Logos.

[1] Delitzsch.

XXIX. 1–25.

THE MEMORY OF HAPPIER DAYS.

1 And Job again took up his parable, and said,
2 Oh that I were as in the months of old,
As in the days when God watched over me;
3 When his lamp shined [1]upon my head,
And by his light I walked through darkness;
4 As I was in [2]the ripeness of my days,
When the [3]secret of God was upon my tent;
5 When the Almighty was yet with me,
And my children were about me;
6 When my steps were washed with butter,
And the rock poured me out rivers of oil!
7 When I went forth to the gate unto the city,
When I prepared my seat in the [4]street,
8 The young men saw me and hid themselves,
And the aged rose up and stood;
9 The princes refrained talking,
And laid their hand on their mouth;
10 The voice of the nobles was [5]hushed,
And their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.
11 For when the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me;
And when the eye saw *me*, it gave witness unto me:
12 Because I delivered the poor that cried,
The fatherless also, [6]that had none to help him.
13 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me:
And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
14 I put on righteousness, and it [7]clothed me:
My justice was as a robe and a [8]diadem.
15 I was eyes to the blind,
And feet was I to the lame.
16 I was a father to the needy:
And [9]the cause of him that I knew not I searched out.
17 And I brake the [10]jaws of the unrighteous,
And plucked the prey out of his teeth.
18 Then I said, I shall die [11]in my nest,
And I shall multiply my days as [12]the sand:
19 My root is [13]spread out [14]to the waters,
And the dew lieth all night upon my branch:
20 My glory is fresh in me,
And my bow is renewed in my hand.

21 Unto me men gave ear, and waited,
And kept silence for my counsel.
22 After my words they spake not again;
And my speech dropped upon them.
23 And they waited for me as for the rain;
And they opened their mouth wide *as* for the latter rain.
24 [15]If I laughed on them, they [16]believed *it* not;
And the light of my countenance they cast not down.
25 I chose out their way, and sat *as* chief,
And dwelt as a king in the army,
As one that comforteth the mourners.

[1] Or, *above*
[2] Heb. *my days of autumn.*
[3] Or, *counsel* Or, *friendship*
[4] Or, *broad place*
[5] Heb. *hid.*
[6] Or, *and* him *that had &c.*
[7] Or, *clothed itself with me*
[8] Or, *turban*
[9] Or, *the cause which I knew not*
[10] Heb. *great teeth.*
[11] Or, *beside* Heb. *with.*
[12] Or, *the phœnix*
[13] Heb. *opened.*
[14] Or, *by*
[15] Or, *I smiled on them when they had no confidence*
[16] Or, *were not confident*

In the sorrowful present, Job goes back in imagination to the happy past, and in a tender elegiac strain describes the joys, the activities, and the honours of the days that are no more. The sum of his happiness had been his sure untroubled sense of the divine presence keeping watch and ward over him, lighting his path, protecting his tent, pervading and hallowing all his days. Of that fellowship he can never now think without the anguish of a broken heart, for to have to say 'the Almighty was yet with me'—to remember a severed friendship, a mysterious, inexplicable misunderstanding, not with man but with God—that is to him the limit of human suffering. The second element of his happiness had been his domestic gladness when he was surrounded by his children. But why does he not give a score of verses, instead of a single line, to those ten children, limning each of them with a few strokes, and making them immortal? It is not the poet's art that fails; it is his unerring judgment that restrains him. He will not make a bereaved father attempt the impossible, but hurries him on to safer themes. It is not so difficult for the impoverished proprietor to recall his former affluence, to picture nature's overflowing bounty. His wealth, however, had been less to him than

the esteem which he enjoyed in public life, and now he fondly dwells on every detail of his experience, so that a convincing picture of ancient Oriental citizenship lives for ever in this page of Scripture. When the great sheikh appeared at the Gate of the city he was received with every mark of honour, young men retiring before him abashed, aged men rising to greet him, princes and nobles hushing their voices. In the council, men waited for his words 'as for the latter rain,' for his cheerfulness inspired confidence in moments of fear, and his counsel was decisive in times of perplexity. And if he thus swayed his fellow-citizens like a chieftain or a king, he was not ignorant that he enjoyed a still wider honour, for he habitually used his wealth for the alleviation of suffering, and his power for the deliverance of the oppressed. What wonder if he had felt sure that he would live long in health and wealth, comparing himself to a tree growing by never-failing waters?

Chs. 29–31 may be called a monologue, for in them Job does not address his friends, and, indeed, never even hints that he is conscious of their presence. The whole pensive utterance —one of the most beautiful things of the kind in any literature —is an illustration of that aphorism of philosophers and poets, that 'a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.' 'In omni adversitate fortunae,' says Boethius,[1] 'infelicissimum genus est infortunii fuisse felicem.' And Dante:

> 'Nessun maggior dolore
> Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
> Nella miseria.'[2]

And Chaucer:

> 'For of fortunes sharp adversitee,
> The worst kinde of infortune is this,
> A man to have ben in prosperitee
> And it remembren, when it passed is.'[3]

In writing this monologue our poet shows himself greatly daring. It is easy to characterise a man as perfect, as the Prologue does (1¹·⁸). It is not so easy to depict a man, and least of all to make him depict himself, in such a way as to

[1] *De Consol. Phil.*, Lib. ii. [2] *Inferno*, v. 121.
[3] *Troilus and Creseyde*, iii. 1625 ff. (ed. Skeat).

constrain the most critical to acknowledge his perfection. It is the highest tribute at once to the genius and to the goodness of the writer to own that he has succeeded. It is the unanimous verdict of the most fastidious judges that the ethical ideal presented in this monologue is finer than anything else in the Old Testament. 'He gives us something greater and higher than we get from the Decalogue and even from the Prophets. He can give us more than the latter, because he speaks through a private person, who introduces us to the most individual relations and the innermost ethical feeling of a pious Israelite, while the prophets have to content themselves with exercising a controlling influence on public affairs.'[1] Job's portrait, faithfully drawn by himself, is extraordinarily like that of the citizen of God's kingdom, as etched by Christ in His Sermon on the Mount.

2 **As in the days when God watched over me.** This loving vigilance was very different from the malignant espionage which afterwards tormented Job, though both are described in much the same language (7^{12} 14^{16}). The one is like the watchfulness of a father, the other of a gaoler.

3 **his lamp . . . his light**: the symbols of prosperity and happiness; cf. 18^{6}.

4 **As I was in the ripeness of my days**: lit. 'my days of autumn.' Job had come, before his affliction, to the time of life in which a man reaps what he has sown, a time which ought, according to the accepted theory, invariably to be a mellow, fruitful, happy season for the righteous man. That it often is such, need not be denied, while no one wonders at the confession sometimes heard even in life's midsummer:

> 'My days are in the yellow leaf;
> The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
> The worm, the canker, and the grief
> Are mine alone.'[2]

The second line, 'When the secret of God was upon my tent,' is strange in English and stranger in Hebrew. With a slight change (בְּסוֹד into בְּסוֹךְ), Buhl and many others read, **When God protected my tent.**

[1] Duhm, p. 145. [2] Byron, aetat. 36.

5 Having numbered his privileges—watched, guided, protected as he was by God—he sums them up in the words, **When the Almighty was yet with me**; and the regret expressed, partly by the past tense and partly by the **yet**, which implies 'no longer,' is immeasurable. Sometimes the loss of a kindred human spirit is so great that in unutterable anguish one can only moan, 'Oh, the difference to me!' But what shall one say who has lost—God? **And my children were about me.** He would be a rash commentator who attempted to expound that.

6 **my steps were washed with butter.** Job uses the language of Oriental hyperbole to express his sense of the exuberance of nature, which is to him an aspect of the kindness of God (cf. Dt 32^{13}). The prose of it is that his milch-kine were numerous. **And the rock poured me out rivers of oil.** The allusion is to either or both of two facts—that the olive-tree loves a rocky soil, and that the oil-presses are hewn out in the rock.

7 **When I went forth to the gate unto the city.** Read, **unto the gate over the city.** The words imply that Job was a land-owner—no nomad or wandering herdsman—having his estate and residence at some distance from the city whose privileges he enjoyed. The Gate of an Eastern town was an elaborate structure (2 S $18^{24.\ 33}$, Ps $24^{7.\ 9}$), corresponding in some degree to the Western town-hall, and the council, which sat in one of the upper rooms, would be 'over the city' (עַלֵּי־קָרֶת). 'When I prepared my seat in the street.' Read **in the broad place** (רְחוֹב), *i.e.* the great space inside the Gate, suggesting the European forum, market-place, or exchange, yet with a difference from each of these, since the East is never the West. In this square Job, as a man of business, had his accustomed seat.

8–10 Job feels a just pride in recalling his civic honours and triumphs. The verses give a vivid idea of the stir created at the Gate by the arrival of the foremost citizen, the observed of all observers. The giddy youth retire before him, and the aged councillors rise to greet him, standing till he has seated himself, while a sudden hush falls on the whole assembly, which includes princes and nobles, *i.e.* the magnates of the city. It is evident that vv.[21-25], which complete Job's recollections of a day—

resembling many days—at the council, have been misplaced, and should stand here.

22, 23 **And my speech dropped upon them. . . . they waited for me as for the rain.** Wise and gracious speech, divine or human, was often compared to rain on parched ground, long and eagerly expected, cheering, refreshing, and fertilising when it came (Dt 32^2, Is $55^{10f.}$). Compare what is said of Ulysses' oratory (*Il.* iii. 221 f.):

> 'But, when he speaks, what elocution flows!
> Soft as the fleeces of descending snows,
> The copious accents fall, with easy art;
> Melting they fall, and sink into the heart.'

24 **If I laughed on them, they believed it not.** The idea would be that his condescension seemed incredible; but while the translation of the Heb. text is correct, Job can scarcely have used such language. The marg. gives a better sense, 'I smiled on them when they had no confidence,' but the text does not yield such a meaning. It is better (with Budde and Duhm) to strike out the negative, and read, '**I smiled on them and they were confident.**' His cheerful serenity restored courage to fainting, troubled hearts. **And the light of my countenance they cast not down.** There is no parallel elsewhere to this phrase, which can hardly be right. Bickell and others take the last words of 25^c, which is a superfluous line, and substitute them for 'they cast not down,' thus getting the sentence, 'And the light of my countenance comforted the mourners.'

25 **I chose out their way.** The words may mean, 'I chose out the way which led to them,' because I loved their company; but more probably the sense is, 'I chose out the way they should take,' *i.e.* I determined in the council their course of action. **as chief . . . as a king in an army.** Among his fellow-citizens Job received such voluntary homage as is yielded to a chieftain, such loyalty as is accorded to a king by his company of warriors.

11–17 These verses give an admirable picture of one of those men who almost redeem the name of Dives from dishonour: a man who, having large resources at his command, uses them for the benefit of others—the poor, the fatherless, the widow, the blind, the lame, the needy, the oppressed.

Every touch adds to the attractiveness of the sketch, and a number of exquisite phrases—'the blessing of him that was ready to perish,' 'caused the heart of the widow to rejoice,' 'eyes to the blind,' 'feet to the lame,' 'a father to the needy'—have become part of the vocabulary of philanthropy in every land.

11 **When the ear heard** *me.* 'Me' is inserted in both lines. The reference may be to Job's audience in the council, where he was blessed for his words; or the meaning may be 'when the ear heard of me,' *i.e.* the ear of the common people, who knew him merely by report and yet called or wished him happy, naïvely believing that his prosperity proved his goodness, while his benevolence put the matter beyond dispute.

13 **The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me.** 'He that is ready to perish' is one word in Heb. (אֹבֵד, *interiturus*). This is not an individual, but any one of all those who, standing on the brink of ruin, must fall unless a strong hand is stretched to save them, and who, when saved, reward their rescuer with lifelong gratitude and affection.

14 **Righteousness** and **justice** (צֶדֶק and מִשְׁפָּט) were to Job **a robe and a diadem,** better 'a turban,' the picturesque *kufiyeh* of the Arab, made of coloured cotton cloth and fastened with a black cord of camel's hair. In the East it is a common thing to compare a man's personal qualities to clothing, and our own word 'habit,' with its double meaning, indicates how natural the usage is. **And it** (righteousness) **clothed me.** Better **clothed itself with me,** a fine expression, meaning that righteousness made itself visible in me—one might almost say, embodied or incarnated itself in me. Compare the sentence, 'But the spirit of the LORD clothed itself with Gideon' (Jg 6^{34}).

16 **I was a father to the needy.** Delitzsch thinks there is a beautiful play of words here (אָב and אֶבְיוֹן), but the assonance is probably accidental. Only in one other OT passage (Is 22^{21}) is the word 'father' used with such a wide meaning. In the original condition of mankind, blood was the one tie which united men, the family the only basis of rights and duties. Every one who was not a kinsman was counted a natural enemy. It is through the extension of domestic relationships

—father and son, brother and sister—that mankind reaches a higher morality.[1] Job's great heart already gives the word 'father' a spiritual and Christian sense (cf. 1 Co 4^{15}). **And the cause of him that I knew not I searched out.** In the ancient East this was an extraordinary thing to do. Enough that an unfortunate person, who might be a complete stranger, had a cause which he could not himself defend; Job investigated it and saw justice done. He acted on the Christian principle of the protection of the weak (men or races) by the strong.

17 **And I brake the jaws** (lit. great teeth) **of the unrighteous.** This benefactor was none the less strong and fearless for being so gentle and kind. His language is, of course, metaphorical, **the unrighteous** (sing. num.) being compared (as the next line clearly shows) to a wild animal whose teeth must be broken. Even now Job feels a glow of satisfaction at the remembrance of some inhuman monster whom he took in hand in order to rescue the prey from his devouring jaws.

18–20 Conscious of his integrity, Job anticipated a long and happy life,—a thought which he expands in three beautiful verses.

18 This couplet should probably read, 'Then I said, I shall die with my nest, And I shall multiply my days **like the phœnix.**' This interpretation, probably as old as the original LXX, is current among the later Jews. The poet knew the fable of the phœnix, which Herodotus (ii. 73) describes as a bird with golden and red plumage, closely resembling an eagle in size and shape. The story assumes various forms. According to Pliny (*H.N.* x. 2), at the close of a long life (500 years is the time usually specified) the sacred bird builds himself a nest with twigs of frankincense and cassia, whereon he dies, and from his corpse is generated a worm which grows into a young phœnix. In the mystic symbolism of later times the bird often served as an emblem of immortality, but that idea is not here. **I shall die with my nest** (עִם־קִנִּי), not 'in my nest.' The words may contain an allusion to the idea that the phœnix and its nest were consumed together in the flames. This does not, however, seem a likely sense, and with the help of the LXX (which has πολὺν χρόνον βιώσω), Budde gets another reading, 'I

[1] See art. 'Family' (Hebrew and Christian) in Hastings' *ERE.*

shall grow old with my nest,' *i.e.* with my brood or family, none of whom die before their time.

19, 20 Job recalls more of the optimistic language which he used in his happy past. Waters at the root, and dew on the branch, of a tree were naturally regarded, by him and by others, as symbols of prosperity. His **glory**, ever fresh, was his acceptance with God and his honour among men, and his **bow**, always renewed, the emblem of his manly strength, with the capability of contending for the right. On these thoughts his mind lingers for a while, and then makes a swift transition to a new theme, which begins at 30[9].

XXX. 1–31.

THE UNHAPPY PRESENT.

1 But now they that are younger than I have me in derision,
Whose fathers I disdained to set with the dogs of my flock.
2 Yea, the strength of their hands, whereto should it profit me?
Men in whom [1]ripe age is perished.
3 They are gaunt with want and famine;
[2]They gnaw the dry ground, [3]in the gloom of wasteness and desolation.
4 They pluck salt-wort by the bushes;
And the roots of the broom *are* [4]their meat.
5 They are driven forth from the midst *of men*;
They cry after them as after a thief.
6 [5]In the clefts of the valleys must they dwell,
In holes of the earth and of the rocks.
7 Among the bushes they bray;
Under the [6]nettles they [7]are gathered together.
8 *They are* children of fools, yea, children of [8]base men;
They [9]were scourged out of the land.
9 And now I am become their song,
Yea, I am a byword unto them.
10 They abhor me, they stand aloof from me,
And spare not to spit [10]in my face.
11 For he hath loosed [11]his cord, and afflicted me,
And they have cast off the bridle before me.

12 Upon my right hand rise the [12]rabble;
They thrust aside my feet,
And they cast up against me their ways of destruction.
13 They [13]mar my path,
They set forward my calamity,
Even men that have no helper.
14 [14]As through a wide breach they come:
In the midst of the ruin they roll themselves *upon me.*
15 Terrors are turned upon me,
[15]They chase [16]mine honour as the wind;
And my welfare is passed away as a cloud.
16 And now my soul is poured out [17]within me;
Days of affliction had taken hold upon me.
17 In the night season my bones are [18]pierced [19]in me,
And [20]the *pains* that gnaw me take no rest.
18 [21]By the great force *of my disease* is my garment disfigured:
It bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.
19 He hath cast me into the mire,
And I am become like dust and ashes.
20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not answer me:
I stand up, and thou lookest at me.
21 Thou art turned to be cruel to me:
With the might of thy hand thou persecutest me.
22 Thou liftest me up to the wind, thou causest me to ride *upon it*;
And thou dissolvest me in the storm.
23 For I know that thou wilt bring me to death,
And to [22]the house appointed for all living.
24 [23]Surely against a ruinous heap he will not put forth his hand;
Though *it be* in his destruction, *one may utter* a cry because of these things.
25 Did not I weep for him that was in trouble?
Was not my soul grieved for the needy?
26 When I looked for good, then evil came;
And when I waited for light, there came darkness.
27 My bowels boil, and rest not;
Days of affliction are come upon me.
28 I go [24]mourning without the sun:
I stand up in the assembly, and cry for help.
29 I am a brother to jackals,
And a companion to ostriches.
30 My skin is black, *and falleth* from me,
And my bones are burned with heat.

31 Therefore is my harp *turned* to mourning,
And my pipe into the voice of them that weep.

[1] Or, *vigour*
[2] Or, *They flee into the wilderness, into &c.*
[3] Or, which *yesternight* was
Or, *on the eve of*
[4] Or, *to warm them*
[5] Or, *In the most gloomy valleys*
[6] Or, *wild vetches*
[7] Or, *stretch themselves*
[8] Heb. men of *no name.*
[9] Or, *are outcasts from the land*
[10] Or, *at the sight of me*
[11] According to another reading, *my cord* (or *bowstring*).
[12] Or, *brood*
[13] Or, *break up*
[14] Or, *As a wide breaking in* of waters
[15] Or, *Thou chasest*
[16] Or, *my nobility*
[17] Heb. *upon.*
[18] Or, *corroded* and drop *away from me*
[19] Heb. *from off.*
[20] Or, *my sinews take &c.*
[21] Or, *By* his *great force is &c.*
[22] Or, *the house of meeting for &c.*
[23] Or, *Howbeit doth not one stretch out the hand in his fall? or in his calamity therefore cry for help?*
[24] Or, *blackened, but not by the sun*

Verses 1–8 probably do not belong to the original poem. The outcasts here described (somewhat resembling those in ch. 24) appear to be aborigines who, being dispossessed of their land and refusing to exchange their freedom for bond-service, have fled before the face of their conquerors to the shelter of desolate valleys; gaunt creatures subsisting on roots, living in holes of the earth, treated as thieves and becoming more and more degenerate. Job's voice is heard again in v.[9], where he begins to depict his present melancholy life, which presents so startling a contrast to his glorious past. He again speaks of God, and to God, with great tension of feeling, yet with a measure of self-restraint, and on the whole it is a brood of smaller foes whose persecutions he now bemoans. Those who formerly regarded him with reverence now make him the subject of their biting satire, or treat him with studied contempt. He feels that the bow of his strength is unstrung, the banner of his pride trailed in the dust. He knows that he is doomed to die, but he cannot help raising at least a drowning man's cry. His lamentations, as he says in mournful self-pity, make him the companion of jackals and ostriches. All the music of his life is changed into mourning.

1 This verse was probably written by a redactor who wished to fit vv.[2-8] into the context. **Whose fathers I disdained.** That the humane poet himself should make his hero speak so contemptuously of bond-servants is inconceivable, as any one

must feel who contrasts the verse with the exquisite language of 31^{15}. Here, the poor slaves are contemned as lower than dogs; there, they are honoured, even reverenced, as fashioned by the fingers of God. The dogs of the East are not the shepherd's companions by day; they merely protect the fold by night.

2 Here begins another poem (cf. 24^{5}) on the pariahs of society, whom the redactor transforms into erewhile servants of Job. Instead of 'whereto should it profit me?' Duhm (putting בָּמַּה לוֹ for לָמָּה לִי) reads simply 'fails.'

3^{b} must be divided in two lines, the second of which is probably misplaced. Duhm puts it before ^{5a}, and by making a slight change gets the sense, 'They grope in wasteness and desolation.'

4 **And the roots of the broom are their meat.** As these roots are exceedingly bitter to the taste, Gesenius proposed to read 'to warm them,' instead of 'their meat' (לְחֻמָּם or לְחַמֵּם for לַחְמָם); but it is doubtful if the writer thinks of the wretched outcasts as getting even that small comfort.

5 **as after a thief**: lit. 'the thief,' the generic art. being expressed in some languages, though not in ours. Reuss has 'comme après le voleur.'

6, 7 **In the holes of the earth.** Banished from their homes, they sink into the condition of troglodytes. In ^{7b} 'they are gathered together' should probably be 'they couple.'

8 'Children of fools' and 'children of base men' (lit. of no name, בְּנֵי בְלִי שֵׁם) were doubtless common terms of reproach. Oriental abuse constantly reflects upon one's ancestors. The opposite of the second phrase is 'men of renown' (lit. 'of name,' אַנְשֵׁי־שֵׁם).

9 Read, **But now I am become their song.** Here it is Job who speaks again. 'Their' refers to the very people who, in the days of his prosperity, had honoured and applauded him. Now the poets of the gutter compose lampoons about him which catch the general ear, making the great man whose sins have found him out an object of derision and contempt. Perhaps even more reputable singers, inspired by the ancient doctrine of retribution, use his fall to point a moral and adorn a tale.

10^{b} **And spare not to spit in my face.** It is an objection

to this rendering that in 10^{a} Job's persecutors 'stand aloof' from him. Budde and Duhm therefore translate 'before me,' while the marg. has 'at sight of me.'

11 A difficult verse. One might read 'He (God) hath loosed His cord (the cord of His girdle) and chastised me,' but this seems too anthropomorphic. Some textual changes are necessary. Budde reads, 'They (Job's tormentors) have loosed their cords to afflict me.' Duhm has, 'He (God) hath loosed my bowstring and afflicted me, And thrown down my banner before my face.' This gives an excellent sense, and stands in contrast to 29^{20}, where the strung bow is a symbol of power.

12 Here the text has evidently suffered. Job compares his base tormentors to a besieging host. 12^{b} is perhaps to be struck out as a dittograph of 11^{b}, 'cast off' and 'thrust aside' being two translations of the same word (יְשַׁלְּחוּ). If 'against me' is taken from 12^{c} and substituted for 'upon my right hand' (which it somewhat resembles in Heb.), a better sense is obtained, 'Against me rise the rabble; They have cast up their ways of destruction.'

13, 14^{a} Here, too, the text is very uncertain. With the help of the LXX Duhm reads, 'They break up my path, They destroy my way. His helpers surround me, And through a wide breach they enter.'

14^{b}, 15^{a} These lines should form a distich. The fortress is stormed, and terrors let loose upon the vanquished.

$15^{b.\,c}$ Read, 'My honour (or nobility נְדִיבָתִי) is chased.' The LXX has 'my hope' (μου ἡ ἐλπίς). Duhm thinks that the parallelism suggests 'my prosperity' (טוֹבָתִי).

17 The first line is too long, and the LXX omits 'in me.' 'The pains that gnaw me,' lit. 'my gnawers,' are not to be interpreted as actual worms.

18 The first line cannot be right. Duhm makes an ingenious emendation (כֹּחַ יִתְחַפֵּשׂ into כַּחֹשׂ יִתְחַבֵּא) which yields the sense, 'By reason of great wasting my garment is crumpled together.' In 18^{b} read, 'It clings to me like my vest.'

19 **He** (God) **hath cast me into the mire.** Both lines of this verse may refer either to Job's outward appearance as a leper, or, more generally, to his deep humiliation.

20 The second line, **I stand up, and thou** (God) **lookest at me**, is strange. The parallel clause, 'Thou dost not answer me,' suggests 'Thou lookest not,' which some adopt. The Syriac has, 'Thou standest up and lookest at me,' with an cruel stare. This reading (which Budde follows) suggests to Duhm another which involves little emendation, 'Thou ceasest (עָמַד having this meaning as well as "stand") to regard me.'

22 In his troubles, Job figures himself as caught up by a whirlwind and blown hither and thither at its mercy. Compare Lear's 'Blow me about in winds!' **And thou dissolvest me in the storm.** An alternative Heb. text gives 'help' (תְּשׁוּעָה) instead of 'storm' (תְּשׁוּאָה, a doubtful form), and the LXX reads, 'Thou dissolved me without help,' which, however, is tame in comparison with the other reading.

23 **Thou wilt bring me to death.** It is possible to read, 'Thou wilt **make me to dwell** (from יָשַׁב instead of שׁוּב) with death, And in the house appointed for all living.' Death is personified, and his house is 'the great involuntary rendezvous of all who live in this world.'[1]

24 These lines, as they stand, are unintelligible. Dillmann (followed by many scholars) reads, 'Howbeit, doth not **a sinking man** (בְּטֹבְעַ for בְּבַעַי) stretch forth his hand? Or doth he not in his calamity cry for help?' Does not every man obey the law of self-preservation? Job has sometimes prayed for the relief of death; but it is life, not death, for which he, like every other human being, instinctively pants.

25 If the Heb. text is correct, Job reflects that his compassion for sufferers in former days gives him now the right to cry for help. This is rather strained, and we expect something more purely human. By changing the 1st pers. into the 3rd, we get the reading, 'Or doth not he weep who is in trouble? Is not the soul of the needy grieved?' These questions continue the train of thought started in v.[24].

27 **My bowels boil, and rest not.** The reference is not to the fever of disease, but to the heat of feeling generated by God's treatment. While the East makes the intestines the seat of emotion, we prefer (with no more reason) some other part of

[1] Delitzsch.

the body, generally the heart or the breast. Shakespeare has the phrase 'seething brains.' 'My heart is hot and restless' is the exact equivalent of Job's words.

28, **I go mourning without the sun.** As this is not a very natural reflection, it is better to make a slight change (נְחַמָּה for חַמָּה) and read, 'I go mourning without comfort.' **I stand up in the assembly, and cry for help.** To find Job, the leper, permitted to stand in the assembly or congregation (קָהָל), is very strange. V.[29] suggests to Duhm the excellent reading, 'I stand up in the company of foxes' (שׁוּעָל for אֲשַׁוֵּעַ). The sufferer pitifully suggests that his right place is among foxes, jackals, and ostriches, all of which are noted for their mournful cries.

30, 31 After another reference to his disease, Job sums up the contrast between his past and his present in pathetic figurative language. His harp and pipe are silent, the joy of life is fled. The concluding words of v.[31] are singularly fine. The parallel phrase, 'my harp is turned to mourning,' leads one simply to expect 'and my pipe to wailing,' which would leave us thinking of Job in his lonely sorrow. But the poet hears, and lets his reader hear, **the voice of them that weep,** making Job speak here, as so often elsewhere, not as an individual, but in the name of all who ever shed a bitter tear. The drama is full of 'the still, sad music of humanity.' The Hebrew 'harp' (כִּנּוֹר) was really the lyre, an instrument used for both popular and sacred music, and the pipe (עוּגָב) was, according to both Nowack[1] and Benzinger,[2] the bagpipe.

XXXI. 1–40.

THE OATH OF CLEARANCE.

1 I made a covenant with mine eyes;
How then should I look upon a maid?
2 [1]For what *is* the portion of God from above,
And the heritage of the Almighty from on high?
3 Is it not calamity to the unrighteous,
And disaster to the workers of iniquity?

[1] *Arch.* i. 277. [2] *Arch.* i. 276.

4 Doth not he see my ways,
And number all my steps?
5 If I have walked with vanity,
And my foot hath hasted to deceit;
6 (Let me be weighed in an even balance,
That God may know mine integrity;)
7 If my step hath turned out of the way,
And mine heart walked after mine eyes,
And if any spot hath cleaved to mine hands:
8 Then let me sow, and let another eat;
Yea, let [2]the produce of my field be rooted out.
9 If mine heart have been enticed unto a woman,
And I have laid wait at my neighbour's door:
10 Then let my wife grind unto another,
And let others bow down upon her.
11 For that were an heinous crime;
Yea, it were an iniquity to be punished by the judges:
12 For it is a fire that consumeth unto [3]Destruction,
And would root out all mine increase.
13 If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maid-servant,
When they contended with me:
14 What then shall I do when God riseth up?
And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?
15 Did not he that made me in the womb make him?
And did not one fashion us in the womb?
16 If I have withheld [4]the poor from *their* desire,
Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;
17 Or have eaten my morsel alone,
And the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;
18 (Nay, from my youth he grew up with me as with a father,
And I have been her guide from my mother's womb;)
19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing,
Or that the needy had no covering;
20 If his loins have not blessed me,
And if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;
21 If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless,
Because I saw my help in the gate:
22 Then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder blade,
And mine arm be broken from the bone.
23 For calamity from God was a terror to me,
And by reason of his excellency I could do nothing.
24 If I have made gold my hope,
And have said to the fine gold, *Thou art* my confidence;

25 If I rejoiced because my wealth was great,
And because mine hand had gotten much;
26 If I beheld [5]the sun when it shined,
Or the moon walking in brightness;
27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed,
And [6]my mouth hath kissed my hand:
28 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judges:
For I should have [7]lied to God that is above.
29 If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me,
Or lifted up myself when evil found him;
30 (Yea, I suffered not my [8]mouth to sin
By asking his life with a curse;)
31 If the men of my tent said not,
[9]Who can find one that hath not been satisfied with his flesh?
32 The stranger did not lodge in the street;
But I opened my doors to [10]the traveller;
33 If [11]like Adam I covered my transgressions,
By hiding mine iniquity in my bosom;
34 Because I feared the great multitude,
And the contempt of families terrified me,
So that I kept silence, and went not out of the door—
35 Oh that I had one to hear me!
(Lo, here is my [12]signature, let the Almighty answer me;)
And *that I had* the [13]indictment which mine adversary hath written!
36 Surely I would carry it upon my shoulder;
I would bind it unto me as a crown.
37 I would declare unto him the number of my steps;
As a prince would I [14]go near unto him.
38 If my land cry out against me,
And the furrows thereof weep together;
39 If I have eaten the [15]fruits thereof without money,
Or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:
40 Let [16]thistles grow instead of wheat,
And [17]cockle instead of barley.

The words of Job are ended.

[1] Or, *For what portion* should I have *of God . . . and what heritage &c.? Is there not calamity &c.?*
[2] Or, *my offspring* Heb. *my produce.*
[3] Heb. *Abaddon.* See ch. 26[6].
[4] Or, *aught that the poor desired*
[5] Heb. *the light.*
[6] Heb. *my hand hath kissed my mouth.*
[7] Or, *denied God*
[8] Heb. *palate.*
[9] Or, *Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.*
[10] Heb. *the way.*
[11] Or, *after the manner of men*
[12] Heb. *mark.*
[13] Heb. *book.*
[14] Or, *present it* to him
[15] Heb. *strength.*
[16] Or, *thorns*
[17] Or, *noisome weeds*

Having contrasted the glory and happiness of the past with the misery and shame of the present, Job solemnly and with great deliberation protests his innocence of any crime that would account for his sufferings. He once more asks for a fair trial—a weighing in an even balance—being convinced that God will acknowledge his integrity. His assurance does not rest on an easy conception of the manner of life which pleases God. He never palters with his conscience; above all the voices of doubt his categorical imperative rings true; and his moral ideal is, indeed, the highest to be found in the OT. He judges himself by an almost evangelical standard of excellence, condemning not only the adulterous act but the lustful look, not only unjust gain but confidence in riches, not only idolatry but the inclination of the heart to idols, not only retaliation on an enemy but pleasure in his downfall. So strongly does he feel the obligation to treat his slaves as the creatures of God, to care for the widow and the fatherless, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, to keep an open door to strangers, that, if he has broken any of these laws—laws for him unwritten, or written only on the tablets of the heart—he imprecates a curse upon his own head. Like ch. 29, the present one is rich in the language of charity, and some of Job's phrases prick the conscience like needles—'eaten my morsel alone,' 'any perishing for want of clothing,' 'not warmed with the fleece of my sheep,' 'opened my doors to the wayfarer.' The conclusion of the monologue is one of the most extraordinary passages in the whole poem. Knowing the right of every accused person to receive the list of his alleged offences, Job boldly demands his Adversary's written indictment, affirming that he will carry it on his shoulder in triumph, nay, wear it as a crown on his head, and come like a prince, with fearless bearing and unfaltering step, into the presence of his Judge.

The transition from ch. 30 to 31 is abrupt, and some scholars think we should expect, as a connecting link, an assertion by Job that the mysterious reversal of his fortune is not traceable to guilt on his part. But since the question of his integrity has dominated the whole discussion, and is to him the vital issue, his sudden plunge *in medias res* is psychologically natural. Some verses of ch. 31 have, however, been quite evidently misplaced by copyists, in particular vv.[38-40].

1 **I made a covenant with mine eyes**: lit. 'for mine eyes' (לְעֵינָי). When a superior dictated to an inferior the rule of their common action, he made a covenant, not with, but for him, which really meant that he gave him an ordinance or injunction. Making a slight change in the second line (וּמָה אֶתְבּוֹנֵן into מֵהִתְבֹּנֵן), Duhm reads, 'I gave an injunction to my eyes that they should not,' etc.

2, 3 **For what is the portion of God . . . the heritage.** Job seems here to concede that connection between character and lot which he has all along been denying. The very vocabulary is that of his opponents. 'Portion' and 'heritage' are Zophar's words (20^{29}). 'Calamity to the unrighteous,' 'disaster to the workers of iniquity'—this is the old retributive doctrine. It is just possible that, as the speaker's mind is dwelling on the past, he returns for the moment to a former point of view, so that his meaning would be, 'For I said, What is the portion,' etc. This, however, is not quite natural, and many scholars regard vv.$^{1-4}$ (which are not found in the original LXX) as an insertion. If genuine, they would stand more naturally before v.^{9}.

5 **Vanity** (שָׁוְא), which denotes emptiness, hollowness, masked nothingness, is here personified as a gay companion with whom one walks, to whom the foot hastens. Her other name is **Deceit** (מִרְמָה, from רָמָה, to beguile, to betray).

6 **Let me be weighed in an even balance.** In its present position this verse must be parenthetical; but if it were placed, without brackets, before v.^{5}, it would make an admirable exordium to Job's magnificent *apologia pro vita sua*. **An even balance**: lit. 'scales of justice' (מֹאזְנֵי, scales, is a dual without a sing.). The comparison of a judicial trial to the weighing of a man in the balance was common (Ps 62^{9}, Dn 5^{27}). Justice is represented in Western art as a blindfolded figure holding an even balance.

7 **mine heart.** The whole chapter conclusively proves that Job's religion is the religion of the heart. If his heart has walked with his eyes (v.^{7}), if it has been enticed (v.^{9}), if it has even been secretly enticed (v.^{27}), he will never forgive himself, still less protest before God that he is innocent. He accepts to

the full that dictum of the wise, that out of the heart are the issues of life (Pr 4^{23}). The third line, 'And if any spot hath cleaved to mine hands,' being metrically superfluous and too indefinite for a chapter in which every word has almost a legal precision, should be regarded as a gloss.

8 **Then let me sow, and let another eat.** He prays that the law of retribution may be rigidly enforced, though he himself will be the sufferer. The nemesis which he imprecates is similar to that in Dt $28^{30f.}$. An awakened conscience is ready for suffering; thoroughly aroused, it even clamours for the execution of justice, till it receives a higher enlightenment, which makes it willing to forgive, as God forgives.

9, 10 **If my heart has been enticed.** Job is willing to suffer if he has not observed the tenth as well as the seventh commandment, that is, if he has not kept his heart as well as his life pure. For a woman to **grind unto another** was to become his bondmaid. The grinding woman was the lowest slave (Ex 11^{5}). ^{10b} points to a retribution corresponding in some measure to the crime of adultery, though there is no reason to impose that meaning on ^{10a}. Even Job's *morale*, though so high, is not the highest, just because no man can completely emancipate himself from the ideas of his age. As a punishment for conjugal infidelity, a conscience-stricken husband imprecated on himself a curse which would in reality fall almost entirely on his innocent and injured wife. When woman has absolutely equal rights with her husband, as she has in Christianity, such a penance becomes preposterous.

11, 12 **For that were a heinous crime. . . . For it is a fire.** Adultery is one of those sins which are doubly chastised—by the law of man, and by the law of nature. It is an iniquity to be punished by the judges, and it is a fire that consumes to destruction (Heb. Abaddon, *i.e.* Sheol). The Hebrews had no hell,—their Sheol being 'the house appointed for all living,'—but they knew that every sin, and especially every sin against love, makes in the guilty conscience its own fire unquenchable. Adultery was compared by the wise to taking fire into the bosom, or walking on hot coals (Pr $6^{27.\ 28}$). In ^{12b} 'root out' is not a suitable predicate to 'fire,' and Duhm proposes to read 'burn out all mine increase' (תְּשָׁרֵשׁ for תְּשָׁרֵף).

13 **If I despise the cause of my manservant or my maidservant.** A 'cause' (מִשְׁפַּט) implied rights for which a man contended; but outside Israel it was scarcely believed in the ancient world that a slave had any rights, and even the Hebrew slave often found his lot very hard, especially the foreign helot who was put by a Hebrew master to laborious taskwork (2 S 20[24]).

14 **What then shall I do when God riseth up?** Job feels that if he were to disregard the rights of his serving men and women, God would justly call him to account, and he would be inexcusable.

15 **Did not he that made me in the womb make him?** This searching question involves a great and far-reaching principle. In the treatment of his slaves, Job is actuated by a motive which rarely touches the conscience of the ordinary slave-owner. He reflects that one and the same God fashioned himself and his slave in the womb; and the inevitable conclusion is that his slave has sacred and inalienable rights of which God is the Guardian. To recognise this fact was no easy matter 'among those old people where the multitude of mankind were regarded as the born slaves of the powerful, to be carved into eunuchs or polluted into concubines at their master's pleasure.'[1] 'The races to whom we owe the Bible were cruel in war; they were revengeful; their veins were filled with blood hot with lust; they knew no art, nor grace, nor dialectic, such as Greece knew, but one service at least they rendered to the world. They have preserved in their prophets and poets this eternal verity,—*He that made me in the womb made him*,—and have proclaimed with divine fury a divine wrath upon all those who may be seduced into forgetfulness of it. In discernment of the real breadth and depth of social duty, nothing has gone beyond the book of Job.'[2]

17 **Or have eaten my morsel alone.** Even in the days of his prosperity, Job's daily bread was his 'morsel' (פַּת, a fragment), for he was never a gourmand; and what he ate, he never ate alone; somehow he always contrived that the fatherless should share his meal. The simplest words become revolutionary when

[1] Froude, 298. [2] *Mark Rutherford*, 296.

they touch the heart or the conscience of humanity; and this line of an ancient drama, magnifying the negative virtue of self-restraint and the positive of thoughtfulness for others, has perhaps had more power to slay the sins of the epicure and the egoist than a hundred ancient sumptuary and modern socialistic laws.

18 Here the Heb. text can scarcely be right, for it is difficult to imagine Job saying that ever since he was a babe he has been the guide of the widow. Many scholars read, 'For from my youth like a father He (God) caused me to grow up, And was my Guide from my mother's womb.' This remarkable reading, which involves but slight textual changes (גִּדְּלַנִי into גִּדַּלְנִי, and אַנְחֵנָּה into נָחַנִי), may be welcomed as an addition to those few OT passages which adumbrate the NT doctrine of the fatherhood of God, and it would go some way to explain the lofty ethics of the Book of Job.

19, 20 **If he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep.** The speaker is a philanthropist because he has an imagination. Facts are for him the food of phantasy, and he so visualises things that they suggest to him instant and imperious duties. Seeing the shivering forms of half-clad wretches, and the comfortable fleeces of his flock, he feels that he will be a criminal if, while sheep are warm, human beings are cold. During a pitiless storm another great-hearted poet thought him 'on the ourie cattle or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle o' winter war'; and such sympathy is only less fine than compassion for those who are so much 'better than a sheep'—a phrase coined by One who loved both men and sheep.

21, 22 **If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless.** Another reference (see v.[17]) to the fatherless is scarcely likely, and the word does not give a good sense here. By simply pointing the Heb. differently (עֲלֵי תָם for עַל יָתֹם) we get **against the blameless.** A man may be tempted to strike a blow at an upright and innocent rival, if he sees his help at the Gate, *i.e.* if he thinks that the judges can be bribed. From this sin—one of the commonest in the East—Job's conscience is free. V.[22] imprecates another retribution in kind. The arm that deals the cruel blow deserves to be broken.

23 **And by reason of his excellency I could do nothing.**

Evidently the meaning is, nothing evil, nothing base. The sense of God's **majesty** (שְׂאֵתוֹ) and the fear of His displeasure restrained Job from evil, while other aspects of God's character —notably His fatherhood, if v.[18] has been rightly interpreted— constrained him to good.

24, 25 **If I have made gold my hope.** Job knew how to be wealthy without making wealth either his confidence or his joy. Free from the narrowing lust of gold, he used riches as a means of doing good to others, but never regarded it as his own chief good. The Hebrew prophets taught that the best things could always be had 'without money and without price' (Is 55[1]), and the wise showed their nation its true veins of wealth—'durable riches and righteousness' (Pr 8[18]). Here, as elsewhere, Job has reached the evangelical standpoint (Mk 10[23. 24]). While Jesus profoundly pitied the rich, it was their trust in wealth, more than their possession of it, which He regarded as making the pursuit and attainment of higher things almost an impossibility. The term for **fine gold** (כֶּתֶם) was a loan-word, probably borrowed from the merchants of Tyre, who did make gold their confidence, with what results one may see in Ezekiel's great twenty-seventh chapter, or in Ruskin's comments thereon.

26, 27 **If I beheld the sun when it shined.** The word for 'the sun' (אוֹר) is properly 'the light,' which may include the stars and the dawn. 'The moon walking in brightness' is lit. 'walking resplendent' (יָקָר). It was not insensibility to the beauty of the heavens which kept Job from being an idolater: if his heart was never **enticed**—betrayed—it was not that he was not sometimes lost in wonder beneath the Syrian stars; if his mouth never kissed his hand—or, as the prettier Heb. idiom has it, his hand never kissed his mouth—while he gazed at the splendour of sun or moon, it was not that his heart did not sometimes leap up in an ecstasy of delight; it was because he had caught a glimpse of the transcendent glory of God (v.[23]).[1] The idolatrous worship of the heavenly bodies was introduced into Judaea from Assyria in the time of Manasseh (2 K 21[3]), and was doubtless continued during the Persian domina-

[1] See a striking passage in Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, Works, xi. 129.

tion. It is philologically curious that in Heb. the sun is (generally) fem. and the moon masc., while the Greeks and Romans worshipped the sun as male and the moon as female. The same difference may be noted in the German and French words.

28 **For I should have lied to God that is above.** The depth and spirituality of Job's religion—the qualities which bring it almost up to the level of the Sermon on the Mount—are illustrated by his sense of the sinfulness of idolatrous thoughts, which seem to him as bad as idolatrous acts, both being a lying to God in the height (מִפְּעָל, LXX *ἐναντίον Κυρίου τοῦ ὑψίστου*).

29 **If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me.** Not only are the classics[1] full of examples of the pitiless hatred of foes, but the Hebrew Psalms, which are morally so much in advance of even later Gentile writings, are by no means exempt from it. 'The man that privily slandereth his neighbour,' says a Psalmist, 'him will I destroy. . . . Morning by morning will I destroy all that are ungodly in the land' (Ps $101^{5.8}$). Another vows again and again that in the name of the LORD he will destroy his enemies (Ps $118^{10.11.12}$; cf. Zophar's language, 27^{7}). The hero of this drama, however, has transcended the imperfect morality of all the imprecatory Psalms. Even for his worst enemies he has no curse, nor does he rejoice in their merited misfortune. He has learned the more excellent way. 'If ch. 31 is the crown of the whole ethical development of the OT, v.[29] is the jewel of that crown.'[2]

30 **I suffered not my mouth to sin by asking his life with a curse.** It is scarcely necessary to find here an allusion to the old idea that a curse had magical power to bring about its own fulfilment. A curse was rather a prayer—which, in Job's inward religion, might be merely an unspoken wish—that evil might befall an enemy. If the writer of Job knew such prayers as 'In Thy loving-kindness destroy all them that afflict my soul' (Ps 143^{12}), 'Send out Thine arrows and destroy them' (144^{6}), or such Psalms as 7, 35, 69, 109, he kept his lips closed while others sang them. On the day of a commination service he would have stayed at home. But his heart would have burned within him if he could have listened to Mt 5^{43-48}.

[1] See Seeley, *Ecce Homo*, 221.

[2] Duhm, 149.

31 The second line, which is metrically too long, and does not yield a good sense, would be made clear and simple by the omission of 'can find one that.' Read, **Who hath not been satisfied with his flesh?** His flesh was, of course, that of his sheep or oxen, not his own, though the LXX extracts the curious meaning, that his maids would fain have eaten up their kind master from love to him (λίαν μου χρηστοῦ ὄντος).

32 **The stranger did not lodge in the street.** The Hebrew family was scarcely complete without the stranger (גֵּר μέτοικος), who, separated for some reason from his own kindred, needed for a time the protection of another home. There were many exhortations (*e.g.* Ex 22^{21}) to deal generously with sojourners; and as God was 'the Protector of strangers' (Ps 146^{9}, cf. Zeus Xenios), hospitality rested on religious sanctions.

33, 34 **If like Adam I covered my transgressions.** Read, 'If after the manner of men,' or still better (changing כְּאָדָם into בְּאָדָם), 'If among men.' The last sin which Job disavows is that of leading a double life, of maintaining the appearance of piety while his heart is false. To compare hypocrisy to Adam's fig-leaves would scarcely be appropriate, and the first man certainly did not fear 'the great multitude.' Job solemnly declares that if he has worn a mask among his fellows, if he has hid iniquity in his bosom,—one thinks of *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Silence of Dean Maitland*,—because he has dreaded the moral judgment of the people, and especially the stigma of the great families or clans, *i.e.* all that constituted society in those days,—if he has done this—— But he never finishes the sentence. He feels that all his protestations are vain; he is like a man fighting with shadows. Ah, if he only knew what crimes he stands accused of—if he had his Adversary's indictment!

35 This verse is very bold. Job once more expresses the passionate desire that **one** would **hear** him, *i.e.* give him a legal hearing. He means no other than God. **Lo, here is my mark** (הֵן תָּוִי), is perhaps the phrase ordinarily used by a person who wished to make it understood that he meant to go to law; or the mark may be the **signature** which Job affixes to his assertion of innocence. **Let him answer me** is a challenge, meaning answer me if He can. As another line is needed to make the verse

a quatrain, and the last line does not construe well as it stands, Duhm suggests that we should read, 'Oh that I had the roll, And the indictment which mine Adversary hath written!' The word for **indictment** (סֵפֶר, book or scroll) is elsewhere used for a legal document (Dt 24^{13}, Jer 3^{8}, Is 50^{1}). The Lat. is *libellus* (dimin. of *liber*), whence our 'libel.'

36 **I would bind it unto me as a crown.** So far from trembling like a guilty man at the sight of his indictment, Job would, in the glow of conscious innocence, exult to receive it, carry it in triumph, and even wear it like a diadem on his head; so sure is he that it would contain no charge that he could not easily refute. On the most searching trial, Omniscience would find him 'a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil.' That is not his own language, but it expresses his meaning. And it is, in truth, the divine verdict, which the reader has known from the beginning.

37 **As a prince would I go near unto him.** Ready to tell the story of his life—every step of it, the whole truth about it—he would come to the place of trial, into the presence of God, with the free and confident bearing of a prince. This final utterance, which forms the fitting sequel to Job's Oath of Clearance, is rhetorically as magnificent as it is morally audacious, and leaves the imaginative reader in an agony of breathless suspense.

38–40 These verses have evidently been misplaced. Job has imagined himself stepping fearlessly into God's audience-chamber, and to bring him down again to thistles and cockle is indeed an anti-climax. The passage was evidently overlooked by a scribe whose eye went astray among the successive paragraphs beginning with 'If,' and, on noticing his mistake, he added the omitted words at the end of the chapter. Budde thinks they may originally have stood after v.^{12}, Duhm after v.^{32}. In their proper place they would be very effective. They call up the image of a landowner whose estate is a Naboth's vineyard. As he has not only paid no purchase-money, but got the real owners done to death, the land cries out against him as a usurper, and its furrows weep for their rightful possessors. Job prays that, if he has come into his property in such a nefarious manner, it may yield him neither wheat nor barley, but only thistles and cockle.

XXXII. 1–22.

THE WISDOM OF A NEW AGE.

1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was
righteous in his own eyes. 2 Then was kindled the wrath of
Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram:
against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself
rather than God. 3 Also against his three friends was his
wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had
condemned Job. 4 Now Elihu had [1]waited to speak unto
Job, because they were elder than he. 5 And when Elihu
saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men,
his wrath was kindled.

6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said,

I am young, and ye are very old;
Wherefore I held back, and durst not shew you mine opinion.

7 I said, Days should speak,
And multitude of years should teach wisdom.
8 But there is a spirit in man,
And the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding.
9 It is not the great that are wise,
Nor the aged that understand judgement.
10 Therefore I [2]said, Hearken to me;
I also will shew mine opinion.
11 Behold, I waited for your words,
I listened for your reasons,
Whilst ye searched out what to say.
12 Yea, I attended unto you,
And, behold, there was none that convinced Job,
Or that answered his words, among you.
13 [3]Beware lest ye say, We have found wisdom;
God may vanquish him, not man:
14 For he hath not directed his words against me;
Neither will I answer him with your speeches.
15 They are amazed, they answer no more:
They have not a word to say.
16 And shall I wait, because they speak not,
Because they stand still, and answer no more?
17 I also will answer my part,
I also will shew mine opinion.

18 For I am full of words;
The spirit [4]within me constraineth me.
19 Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent;
Like new [5]bottles [6]it is ready to burst.
20 I will speak, that I may [7]be refreshed;
I will open my lips and answer.
21 Let me not, I pray you, respect any man's person;
Neither will I give flattering titles unto any man.
22 For I know not to give flattering titles;
Else would my Maker soon take me away.

[1] Heb. *waited for Job with words.* [2] Or, *say*
[3] Or, *Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom; God thrusteth him down, not man: now he &c.* [4] Heb. *of my belly.*
[5] Or, *wine-skins* [6] Or, *which are ready* [7] Or, *find relief*

In the original poem, the daring conclusion of Job's long monologue, 'As a prince would I go near unto him' (31^{37}), is naturally followed by an expectant silence—the lull before a storm—which is presently broken, with overwhelming effect, by the divine voice speaking out of the whirlwind (38^{1}). Reasons have been given in the Introduction for the view that the personality of Elihu is the creation of a later writer. The dramatic power of the book is heightened by the omission of his speeches, which are not only unnecessary to the progress of ideas, but lack the stamp of the master mind which conceived the original drama. At the same time this addition to the poem (chs. 32–37) has an intrinsic interest and value, which are greatly enhanced when it is welcomed as the authentic utterance of a later age that had its own distinctive character, and made its own not unimportant contribution to the religious development of Israel. Elihu is not so much an individual as a *Zeitgeist.* He is the *alter ego* of a young thinker who may be regarded as the representative and exponent of the wisdom of his generation. The new age, which takes itself very seriously, has not abandoned the old doctrine of retribution; it orthodoxly regards a sufferer as a sinner, and a doubter as the companion of scoffers; its spokesman, despite his protestations of strict impartiality, takes the side of the friends in the debate. But he has a new and effective mode of justifying the ways of God, having learned that affliction is often sent in love to discipline, purify, and perfect the sufferer. He has mastered the truth that

'sweet are the uses of adversity,' and the inspiration of a great idea has opened his lips and made him something of a prophet.

Elihu introduces himself as a young bystander, who has listened with deference while his seniors have been debating a question in which he is profoundly interested. He confesses that, while an auditor, he has been chafing under the restraints imposed by etiquette upon youth. The unconvincing arguments which he has heard compel him to reason that years do not always bring wisdom. At the same time he knows that there is a divine spirit which gives to youth an enlightenment sometimes denied to age. Feeling the power of an afflatus which forces him to seek the relief of utterance, and having a conviction which he believes to be the truth of God, he realises that he must not show undue respect for any human authority, else he will incur the severest divine displeasure.

1 A brief prose passage introduces the new speaker, and explains the motives which induce him to intervene in the debate. The phrase **these three men** at once betrays the hand of a new writer, for both the People's Book and the Dialogues habitually refer to the 'friends' of Job. When this author states that the three were silent because they saw that Job was **righteous in his own eyes**, he evidently shares their opinion that he was not truly righteous, whereas the author of Job's splendid self-vindication (chs. 29–31) intended it to settle once for all the question of his hero's innocence, and the divine speech (chs. 38, 39) has not a word to say against Job's integrity. The LXX and the Syriac have 'because he was righteous in their eyes,' as if he had at length won his friends over to that opinion; but this is clearly wrong.

2 While no reference was made to the parentage of Job or of his friends, the new writer states that Elihu ('my God is he') was the son of Barachel ('God blesses') the Buzite (see Gn 22^{21}, Jer 25^{23}), of the family of Ram. The last term can scarcely be a contraction for Aram (Syria), which would have been called the land, not the family, of Ram. In 1 Ch $2^{9.\ 10.\ 25}$ Ram is first called the brother and then the son of Jerahmeel. Duhm suggests that Elihu may have been named after Eliphaz, from whom he borrows a good many of his ideas.

2 The wrath of Elihu was kindled against Job, because he

justified himself **rather than God.** Some render 'in God's sight,' but in Heb. prose this would be differently expressed (not מֵאֱלֹהִים but לִפְנֵי הָאֵל). Elihu is wrathful because Job has not only, by the assertion of his innocence, professed to be righteous before God, but, by his attacks upon the moral government of the world, virtually made himself more just than God.

3 Elihu was also wrathful against the three friends 'because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.' Another reading was **and so had condemned God.** The substitution of 'Job' for 'God' was one of the eighteen 'corrections of the scribes,' which set aside what seemed to be objectionable readings. Here, however, is a case where the displaced reading is probably the right one. Elihu does not blame the friends for condemning Job, for he does the same very heartily himself. He is angry with them because he feels that their failure to defend God is a virtual, albeit an unintentional, admission that God is unrighteous.

5 **his wrath was kindled.** Here for the fourth time the introduction alludes to Elihu's wrath, which was evidently in the writer's view a righteous indignation.

6 **mine opinion.** Three times in this chapter does Elihu refer to his 'opinion.' At first he modestly holds back, in the presence of aged, venerable, and presumably wise men, not venturing to express his opinion; but when his idea of the disputants undergoes a change, and he realises that wisdom may be an inspiration of the young rather than of the old, he resolves to declare his opinion (v.[10]); and finally, under a divine constraint, he feels that he cannot but speak what he knows (v.[17]). Our word 'opinion,' however, would have seemed to him too weak to express his meaning. His opinion (דֵּעִי, knowledge) is really his conviction. 'There is a wide distinction between supposing and knowing — between fancy and conviction — between opinion and belief. Whatever rests on authority remains only supposition. You have an opinion when you think what others think. You *know* when you feel.'[1] The word for 'opinion' is late, being used by Elihu alone (five

[1] F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, ii. 100.

times by him); and this is one of many linguistic evidences that his speech is an addition to the poem.

8 **But there is a spirit in man.** This implies no more than that the breath of life is in every man; but the following verse proves that Ehilu is claiming for some men a special inspiration. Following Symmachus, who has ὄντως δὲ πνεῦμα Θεοῦ ἐστιν ἐν ἀνθρώποις, many scholars read, 'But the spirit of God is in man.' Duhm suggests, 'But the spirit enlightens man' (cf. Ps 119^{130}). **And the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding.** One of the distinctive features of Elihu's speeches is an advanced conception of the spirit of God. Job and his friends have much to say of the human spirit and its attitude to God (6^{4} 7^{11} 15^{13} etc.), but the spirit by which God garnishes the heavens (26^{13}) is no more than the wind, and the breath of God is synonymous with the blast of His anger (4^{9}). To Elihu, however, the divine spirit is the secret of wisdom in man and of life in all nature. He feels that it is the breath of the Almighty (נִשְׁמַת שַׁדַּי) that gives himself understanding. He is full of words because the spirit within him (רוּחַ בִּטְנִי) constrains him (32^{18}). The spirit of God has made him, and the breath of the Almighty given him life (33^{4}). And in a very remarkable passage (34^{12-15}) he says that if God were to withdraw His spirit from the world, the result would be universal death. 'Let us remember again that Elihu represents the debates of the "wise men" of the post-regal period, who were conscious of being in some sense "inspired" like their prophetic predecessors.'[1]

9 **It is not the great that are wise.** 'The great' (רַבִּים) must here denote the great in age (LXX πολυχρόνιοι, Vulg. *longaevi*). As the word has not elsewhere that meaning (Gn 25^{23} is scarcely a parallel case), Beer and Budde propose to read 'the grey-haired' (יְשִׁבִים), and Duhm 'the multitude of days' (רֹב יָמִים, as in v.[7]). Elihu at first hearkened with awe to those most potent, grave, and reverend signiors, who 'should teach wisdom'; but the spell has snapped, the reaction has come, and, in positive anger with the solemn grey-beards, he now blurts out the cruel truth that age does not bring wisdom.

[1] Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 43.

15–17 **They are amazed, etc.** This passage has probably been misplaced in transcription, and the logical sequence of ideas is restored if it is read after v.[9]. The unattached **They** has then a clear reference to 'the aged.' The unpoetical [10a] may be omitted, and [17b] treated as a duplicate of [10b]. Elihu is painfully impressed by the speechless amazement of the once redoubtable Three, who, as exhausted combatants, have retired from the fray. But is the truth vanquished because her champions are weak? May not another protagonist, inspired by 'the breath of the Almighty,' come to the fight and to the rescue?

11, 12 **Behold, I waited for your words.** These verses ought to form three distichs instead of two tristichs. We should probably invert [11c] and [12a], reading, 'Yea, I attended unto you Whilst ye searched out what to say.' Elihu reluctantly expresses his keen disappointment with the course of the debate. He has 'waited,' 'listened,' 'attended,' as he characteristically says, for he often secures his effects by the multiplication of words. Certain arguments ought to have been stated, and he has been burning to utter them; but the fitting and telling words have never been spoken, with the lamentable result that Job remains unconvinced.

13, 14 Elihu imagines the crestfallen friends muttering to one another, 'It is vain to contend longer, we must own ourselves beaten; **we have found wisdom**, and cannot gainsay it; but **God** will answer him, not man.' To which Elihu in effect answers, 'Not so fast; he has not yet met me, and I will encounter him with different weapons.' It is apparent that the creator of Elihu made a careful study of the original drama, written for an earlier period, and that he wished not only to supplement, but in some respects to supersede, its teaching.

20 **'I will speak, that I may be refreshed.** That is a somewhat euphemistic translation; for what Elihu says is, 'that I may find relief.' Jerome's amusing rendering, '*et respirabo paululum*,' is followed by Luther, '*dass ich Odem hole*.' Elihu compares himself to a wine-skin that is ready to burst. Contrast the more dignified, if not more forcible, simile used by Jeremiah (20[9]) when necessity is laid upon him to speak: 'There is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing and cannot contain.' Bradley aptly

quotes the description of the bard's afflatus in the 'Lord of the Isles':

> . . . 'a power that will not be suppressed,
> It prompts his voice, it swells his veins,
> It burns, it maddens, it constrains.

21 **Neither will I give flattering titles unto any man.** No man can be always so serious and virtuous, without being sometimes an unconscious humorist. Elihu declares that he will show respect to no man's person, 'betitle no man' (אַכַּנֶּה, a word which he solemnly repeats), else his Maker will soon take him away! It must be difficult to breathe on these heights. To give honorific titles to any poor human beings (Rabbis, Doctors, and such like) is no doubt a very foolish and reprehensible practice, but a death-sentence for it is somewhat too severe. As Duhm remarks, 'it is not quite so tragical as all that.' The word for 'betitle' is found only here and in Is 44[5]. The corresponding Arabic noun *kunya* means (1) the surname which a man receives when he is called after some particular son, *e.g.* Abu Bekkar, and (2) such a title of honour as *Nûr-eddîn*, 'Light of Religion.'

XXXIII. 1–33

THE SPIRITUAL VALUE OF PAIN.

1 Howbeit, Job, I pray thee, hear my speech,
And hearken to all my words.
2 Behold now, I have opened my mouth,
My tongue hath spoken in my [1]mouth.
3 My words *shall utter* the uprightness of my heart:
And that which my lips know they shall speak sincerely.
4 The spirit of God hath made me,
And the breath of the Almighty giveth me life.
5 If thou canst, answer thou me;
Set *thy words* in order before me, stand forth.
6 Behold, [2]I am toward God even as thou art:
I also am formed out of the clay.
7 Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid,
Neither shall my pressure be heavy upon thee.

8 Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing,
And I have heard the voice of *thy* words, *saying*,
9 I am clean, without transgression;
I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me:
10 Behold, he findeth [3]occasions against me,
He counteth me for his enemy;
11 He putteth my feet in the stocks,
He marketh all my paths.
12 [4]Behold, I will answer thee, in this thou art not just;
For God is greater than man.
13 [5]Why dost thou strive against him?
For he giveth not account of any of his matters.
14 For God speaketh [6]once,
Yea twice, *though man* regardeth it not.
15 In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falleth upon men,
In slumberings upon the bed;
16 Then he [7]openeth the ears of men,
And sealeth their instruction,
17 [8]That he may withdraw man *from his* purpose,
And hide pride from man;
18 [9]He keepeth back his soul from the pit,
And his life from perishing by the [10]sword.
19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed,
[11]And with continual strife in his bones:
20 So that his life abhorreth bread,
And his soul dainty meat.
21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen;
And his bones that were not seen stick out.
22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the pit,
And his life to the destroyers.
23 If there be with him [12]an angel,
An interpreter, one [13]among a thousand,
To shew unto man [14]what is right for him;
24 [15]Then he is gracious unto him, and saith,
Deliver him from going down to the pit,
I have found a ransom.
25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's;
He returneth to the days of his youth:
26 He prayeth unto God, and he is favourable unto him;
So that he seeth his face with joy:
And he restoreth unto man his righteousness.
27 [16]He singeth before men, and saith,
I have sinned, and perverted that which was right,
And [17]it profited me not:

28 He hath redeemed my soul from going into the pit,
And my life shall behold the light.
29 Lo, all these things doth God work,
Twice, *yea* thrice, with a man,
30 To bring back his soul from the pit,
That he may be enlightened with the light of [18]the living.
31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me:
Hold thy peace, and I will speak.
32 If thou hast any thing to say, answer me:
Speak, for I desire to justify thee.
33 If not, hearken thou unto me:
Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom.

[1] Heb. *palate.* [2] Or, *I am according to thy wish in God's stead*
[3] Or, *causes of alienation*
[4] Or, *Behold, in this thou art not just; I will answer thee: for &c.*
[5] Or, *Why dost thou strive against him, for that he . . . matters?*
[6] Or, *in one way, yea, in two*
[7] Heb. *uncovereth.*
[8] Or, *That man may put away* his *purpose, and that he may hide*
[9] Or, *That he may keep back*
[10] Or, *weapons* [11] Another reading is, *While all his bones are firm.*
[12] Or, *a messenger* [13] Or, *of the thousand*
[14] Or, *his uprightness*
[15] Or, *And he be gracious . . . and say . . . ransom: his flesh &c.*
[16] Or, *He looketh upon men*
[17] Or, *it was not requited unto me* Or, *it was not meet for me*
[18] Or, *life*

Elihu's prolix and somewhat turgid exordium amounts to a claim of inspiration. It is his sense of having received the breath of the Almighty, of having been taught of God, that constrains him to break his silence,—that changes his modest deference to the authority of age and experience into indifference to human opinions,—that makes him positive and dogmatic, ready to set all parties right, impetuous, self-confident, eloquent. And it is by the intrinsic value of his teaching, rather than by the language in which he clothes it or the manner in which he presents it, that he is to be judged. A Western audience does not like a speaker to preface his oration by announcing that he is bursting with ideas, and it would overwhelm him with ridicule if he were to compare himself to a fermenting wine-sack. Excessive self-commendation is among us the unpardonable sin of oratory. But in the East nothing is more common than

for a poet or a speaker to whet the appetite of his readers or hearers by assuring them that his heart is overflowing with a goodly matter, his tongue is the pen of a ready writer (Ps 45[1]). If Elihu is after all in possession of no vital truth for the mind and heart of humanity, he must be dismissed 'as a mere word-spinner,' 'a conceited and arrogant young man,' whose speech is 'a babbling stream to be passed by without notice.'[1] But if he is the representative man of an age which had some title to instruct and to comfort mankind, his message is to be received with gratitude, even if the defects of his own qualities are very apparent.

Having asserted his right to speak, Elihu turns from the friends to Job, whom he alone addresses by name. In another, briefer preamble, he announces that the mysteries of providence are about to be solved without a divine intervention, and by one whose presence will not, like a theophany, appal the beholder. He then carefully summarises Job's argument, with the verbal accuracy—one cannot but think—of a speaker who is quoting from a written book rather than from remembered speeches. He proceeds to answer Job's bitter and persistent complaint of God's silent indifference; and his method of justifying God, marked as it is by a striking advance upon the theodicy of the friends, constitutes his chief claim to independence and originality. He affirms that God is *not* silent, and that if man does not hear Him the fault is his own. God speaks unto men, now by nightly dreams and visions, now by painful sicknesses. Affliction is the expression of divine goodness, which seeks to wean the sufferer from evil and to save him from death. Not that suffering as such has any magical potency to convert the sinner; it is suffering interpreted by an angelic mediator—one of a thousand who speed at God's behest to show man his unrighteousness—that has virtue to redeem the soul. Elihu repeats the pathetic words sung by the restored penitent, who comes into the temple to bring unto God his thank-offering.

2 **Behold now, I have opened my mouth, My tongue hath spoken in my mouth.** The treatment of such a verse as this

[1] For unfavourable opinions of Elihu in ancient and modern times, see Delitzsch, ii. 238 f.; Bradley, 290.

brings out the characteristics of all the expositors. Bickell would cancel the lines as 'too prosaic even for Elihu.' Delitzsch thinks they contain 'circumstantial statements which solemnly inaugurate what follows with a consciousness of its importance.' The difficulty is to know how the statements could ever be made 'solemnly.' Budde, Elihu's chief modern defender, admits that they are 'pompous and empty'; and, while he tries, without much success, to make them appear less so, he is willing to believe that Bickell may be right. Duhm, who applies to Elihu's exordium Horace's '*montes laborant*,' cannot resist the temptation to ask what will be left if all the other puerilities of Elihu's speeches are removed. But this great scholar's general treatment of Elihu is marked by less than his ordinary perfection of insight.

3 The first line being too short and the second too long, the first word of the latter (וְרַעַת, 'and knowledge') must belong to the former. Wright reads, 'My heart speaketh (אֲמַר for אֲמָרַי) uprightness and knowledge, And my lips utter sincerity.' Duhm has, 'My heart overflows (יָשַׁק for יִשַּׁר) with words of knowledge, And my lips speak sincerely.'

4–7 **Behold, I am toward God even as thou art.** Elihu thinks it needful or advisable to inform Job that this meeting is no interview between God and man, such as Job has often audaciously demanded and yet instinctively dreaded, for Elihu stands in the same relation to God as Job, being formed of the same clay, animated by the same breath of God, and therefore his presence will not overpower a man with terror. The paragraph is remarkable for its thinly veiled criticism of the drama in its original form. The author of the Elihu speeches evidently felt that Job's enigma could be solved without the theophany, which offended his sense of propriety. If the language of Elihu, who is made to pose as a substitute for God, is grotesque, the reason is partly that he is not speaking naturally, but making oblique and critical references to passages in Job's speeches (9^{34} 13^{21}). V.^{4}, which would stand, as Budde notes, better after v.^{6}, means that Elihu is no more than a being drawing human breath. The first line, 'The spirit of God hath made me,' is strangely expressed, and Budde admits (what Duhm affirms) that the

verse reads like a variant of 32^{8}. The word in v.[7] for **my pressure** (אֹכְפִי) is found nowhere else, and the LXX (from a reading כַּפִּי) has 'my hand' (cf. 23^{2}).

8–10 Elihu selects from Job's speeches a number of passages in which the claim of innocence is advanced and God's righteousness is impugned. Instead of grappling with Job's protestation that his character does not explain his unparalleled sufferings, Elihu severely animadverts upon his self-righteousness, ignoring such confessions as 7^{21} 13^{26}. Elihu thus becomes the critic not only of Job's own strong assertions (9^{21} 10^{7} 16^{17} $23^{10\text{-}12}$ $27^{5.6}$ 31), but of the august claim made for him in the Prologue (1^{8} 2^{3}). The wise men whom Elihu represents have not accepted the teaching of the Book of Job, that the world is full of unmerited suffering; but, alongside of the old doctrine of retribution, they have begun to emphasise the new one of the disciplinary value of pain. In [8b] the LXX reading, **the voice of thy words**, is better than 'the voice of words,' the latter being an empty expression which even Duhm does not wish to ascribe to Elihu. Some of Job's sayings are quoted verbally (v.[10b] is 13^{24b}, and v.[11] is 13^{27a}), others are changed. He did not use the word for 'innocent' (חַף) which is found only here in the OT, nor the word translated 'occasions' (תְּנוּאוֹת). This word properly means 'frustrations,' a sense which does not suit the context; and many scholars substitute a term which does denote 'occasions' or 'pretexts' (תֹּאֲנוֹת, cf. Jg 14^{4}).

12 **For God is greater than man.** If Elihu has ended his quotations from Job, and here begins to refute them, he merely says, like the friends, that God is too great for human criticism; while others abide our question, He is free. But the text is doubtful, and Elihu may be still citing Job's words. In [12a] the LXX reads, 'Behold, thou sayest, I am righteous, and He doth not answer.' The word for 'I am righteous' (אֲצְדַּק) is very like the one for 'I cry' (אֲצְעַק), and Bickell reads, 'Behold, thou sayest, I cry, and He doth not answer.' With another change Duhm gets, 'Behold, if I cry, He doth not answer.' In [12b] the LXX reads, 'For He that is above men is eternal,' which suggests to Duhm, 'He hideth Himself from men,' the word for 'eternal'

(lit. 'from eternity,' מֵעֹלָם) being easily changed into 'hideth' (מַעֲלִים).

13 **he giveth not account of any of his matters.** If the text is right, Elihu means that God is an arbitrary sovereign, who never condescends to explain His actions; but the following verses belie this doctrine. Read with the LXX, 'Why dost thou strive with Him, saying, He answereth none of my words?' (דְּבָרָיו for דְּבָרַי).

14 Elihu now deals in earnest with Job's complaint that God is mysteriously silent. He affirms that God has various ways of speaking to men, and that He patiently tries one way after another. The meaning of [14b] is doubtful. The Syriac and Vulg. (followed by Duhm) read, 'Yea twice, and doth not revoke it' (*non repetit*), *i.e.* God does not take back His word of grace. Ley suggests, 'Yea twice, if man regardeth it not,' God giving a second warning if the first passes unheeded. Beer and others render, 'For God speaketh in one way, And in a second, and then (speaketh) no more,' the limit of grace being reached; but that can scarcely be Elihu's meaning.

15 In the first place, God speaks to man through dreams and dream-visions, and His design is ethical—to frustrate man's evil purposes and to curb his pride. Elihu here follows Eliphaz ($4^{12ff.}$), but the second line, which is metrically superfluous, is probably a reader's quotation of 4^{13b}. Eliphaz regarded his dream-vision as an awful favour vouchsafed to himself, and as a means of enlightening his mind; Elihu finds similar experiences (if not exactly so weird) quite common, and regards them as designed not merely for man's instruction, but for his spiritual awakening and conversion. 1 S 28^{15} points to an ancient practice of deliberately seeking supernatural dreams. One may compare the dream-visions of Enoch (chs. 83–90). It is well known that Plato assigned a prophetic character to some dreams.

16 **And sealeth their instruction.** This reading is very doubtful. The Syriac, LXX, and Aquila have 'scareth them' instead of 'sealeth' (יְחִתֵּם for יַחְתֹּם, cf. 7^{14}); and for 'their instruction' the LXX reads 'with visions' (reading בְּמוֹרָאִים for בְּמוּסָרָם), which gives the line, 'And scareth them with visions.' This makes an excellent parallel to [16a].

17 'That he may withdraw man from his purpose': better, with the LXX, **from unrighteousness** (ἀπὸ ἀδικίας). This gives the required parallel to 17^{b}. To 'hide pride' being an unlikely expression, Dillmann suggests, 'And destroy pride from man' (יְבַלֶּה for יְכַסֶּה); and Bickell more happily, 'And prune man's pride' (יְכַסֵּחַ). The sin from which deliverance is required is thus actual, not merely potential. It does not appear that Elihu anywhere attributes to suffering a preventive as well as a curative design.

18 **And his life from perishing by the sword.** The Heb. text (מֵעֲבֹר בַּשֶּׁלַח) is strange; perhaps the meaning is 'from rushing upon the weapon.' Duhm proposes to read 'from going down to Sheol' (בִּשְׁאֹלָה).

19–26 If the first method of turning a sinner from the error of his ways fails, God employs another, chastening him with severe sickness, and sending an angel to interpret the discipline to him. Repenting and being forgiven, the sufferer is restored to health, and publicly praises God for His goodness.

19 'And with continual strife in his bones': marg. 'While all his bones are firm.' Neither reading gives a good sense. The LXX has, **And all his bones are benumbed** (אִסַּר for אֵתָן). There is only a jot (or ׳) of difference between 'strife' (רִיב) and 'all' (רב, lit. 'the multitude of').

20 **So that his life abhorreth bread, And his soul dainty meat** (cf. Ps 107^{18}). '**His life**' and '**his soul**' are here synonymous, and mean his appetite. 'Soul' (נֶפֶשׁ) is often used in this sense, and in 38^{39} 'the appetite of young lions' is lit. 'the life' (חַיָּה). The patient nauseates wholesome food, however tempting it is made, while the hunger of a healthy man makes even bitter things sweet (Pr 27^{7}).

21 The Heb. text is doubtful, and the sense educed from both lines extremely prosaic. In the first, Budde reads 'His flesh is consumed away, so that it loses its comeliness' (מְרֹאִי, cf. 1 S 16^{12}). Duhm suggests 'consumed with wasting' (מֵרֹזִי), which is pleonastic. In 21^{b} 'that were not seen' is probably a

dittograph of the last word of [21a]. Read simply, 'And his bones are laid bare,' so lean has he become.

22 **And his life to the destroyers.** The destroyers, or executioners (מְמִתִים), are the angels of death. The word occurs nowhere else in the OT, though the angel of the pestilence is alluded to in 2 S 24[16. 17], Ps 78[49]. The ordinary teaching of early times was that 'Jahweh killeth and maketh alive' (1 S 2[6]); but according to the school of Elihu every death is mediated by an angel. It is difficult to surmise how much individuality is ascribed to these destroyers. 'Any personal share or sympathy with the operations that they perform is not brought out. They are so far neutral, or morally indifferent. The destroying angel is not a cruel or bad angel.'[1] Another indication of the advanced angelology of Elihu's time is found in the next verse.

23, 24 When the death-angel is about to claim the sick man, another angel, **an interpreter**, or mediator (מֵלִיץ), is sent to save his life. This angel shows him his fault, is gracious to him, and bids the angel of death release him. The two verses should form three distichs. In [23c] 'what is right for him' (יָשְׁרוֹ, his uprightness) is not so good as the LXX reading, **his fault** (*μέμψιν*, *i.e.* מוּסָרוֹ). In [24a] read, 'And He be gracious unto him, and say.' In Elihu's time the grace of God was commended to men by the doctrine of 'the thousand' angels who were sent to dispense it. There is no reason to suppose that 'one of the thousand' meant 'one who soars above the thousands, and has not his equal among them.'[2] Any one of the thousand was equally fit to speed on the errand of mercy[3] (cf. He 1[14]). The Targum translates the word for 'interpreter' by פרקליטא, *i.e.* *παράκλητος*, 'comforter,' which afterwards became one of the names of the Holy Spirit. **I have found a ransom.** The ransom (כֹּפֶר), or price of a life, which the interpreting angel has found, and which will satisfy the angel of death, is either the sick man's affliction (cf. 36[18]), or (more probably) his repentance. No other atonement is here contemplated.

25–28 Elihu now tells of the sick person's recovery, his thank-offering in the temple, his public confession of God's

[1] A. B. Davidson, *OT Theology*, 299. [2] Delitzsch.
[3] Cf. Milton's Sonnet on his Blindness.

goodness, and his song of praise. With 25^{a} cf. 2 K 5^{14}, and with 25^{b} cf. Ps 103^{5}.

26 **So that he seeth his face with joy.** To see God's face was to come into His house for sacrifice. 26^{c} and 27^{a} should form a distich. If the Heb. text of the former, 'And He restoreth unto man his righteousness,' is correct, 'He' must refer to God; but this is very awkward, as 'he' in 26^{b} and 27^{a} clearly refers to the penitent sinner. Duhm and Beer read very plausibly, 'And he publisheth unto men His righteousness' (where וַיַּסֵּפֶר or וַיַּבַּשֵּׂר takes the place of וַיָּשֶׁב). The restored man cannot but proclaim God's saving (delivering) righteousness (cf. Ps 66^{16}).

27, 28 Elihu even repeats the words of confession and praise used in the temple by the man to whom affliction has proved a means of grace. In 27^{c} read, **And it was not requited to me,** as it would have been if God had not been merciful as well as just. Some read, 'And He requited me not' (changing שָׁוָה into שִׁוָּה). The line is metrically too short, and the LXX completes it with 'for my sins.' Delitzsch finely calls these two verses 'a psalm *in nuce*.' They contain the germ of a song of redemption. 'God hath redeemed my soul from going into the pit'—that is the substance of many an experimental hymn of praise. Duhm suggests that the author of the Elihu speeches may well have been one of the composers of the temple songs. The last line of this burst of psalmody is very beautiful, and our version scarcely does justice to the Heb. idiom. The singer says not merely, 'My life shall behold the light,' but 'behold it with joy' (not הָאוֹר, but בָּאוֹר). Duhm has '*freut sich des Lichtes*,' Budde '*darf am Licht sich weiden*.' Truly the light is sweet, doubly sweet to the convalescent, and immeasurably sweeter still to him who rises from his bed of sickness a new man.

29 **Lo, all these things doth God work. Twice,** *yea* **thrice with a man.** Elihu has a lively sense of the grace of God, who patiently renews His endeavours to touch the heart and save the life of the sinner. Nothing could be farther from Elihu's mind than the idea that 'God's patience has an end'—that He works thrice and then stops—which is Merx's comment on the verse.

30 Lingering over the sick man's recovery, as if in profound

sympathy with him, Elihu adds, 'That he may be enlightened with the light of life,' or, as Delitzsch explains, 'That it (his soul) may become light in the light of life (as it were, bask in the new and restored light).' On this comforting note the present speech ends.

31–33 **Mark well, O Job.** This renewed request for a careful hearing serves less as the conclusion of the first speech than as the exordium of the second. Whenever Elihu becomes self-conscious, he is prolix, pompous, and patronising. Budde strikes out v.[33] as being identical in thought and largely in diction with v.[31]. The original LXX omits vv.[31-33] with the exception of [31a]. Duhm thinks that, if the passage is genuine, it is unsuitable for the end of a speech, and would stand better before 34^{16}. **Speak, for I desire to justify thee.** These words do not mean that Elihu wishes to justify Job on the main issue, as he very soon shows (34^{7}). He merely desires to ingratiate himself with his hearer, encouraging him to speak if he has 'anything to say,'—though that may be doubtful,—and assuring him of his own strong inclination to be friendly. But a Daniel come to judgment must not respect any man's person (32^{21}), and when a man's friend becomes his judge, he is the severest judge of all.

XXXIV. 1–37.

THE CHARACTER OF THE CREATOR.

1 Moreover Elihu answered and said,
2 Hear my words, ye wise men;
And give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.
3 For the ear trieth words,
As the palate tasteth meat.
4 Let us choose for us that which is right:
Let us know among ourselves what is good.
5 For Job hath said, I am righteous,
And God hath taken away my right:
6 [1]Nothwithstanding my right I am *accounted* a liar;
[2]My wound is incurable, *though I am* without transgression.
7 What man is like Job,
Who drinketh up scorning like water?

8 Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity,
And walketh with wicked men.
9 For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing
That he should [3]delight himself with God.
10 Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding:
Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness;
And from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.
11 For the work of a man shall he render unto him,
And cause every man to find according to his ways.
12 Yea, of a surety, God will not do wickedly,
Neither will the Almighty pervert judgement.
13 Who gave him a charge over the earth?
Or who hath [4]disposed the whole world?
14 [5]If he set his heart [6]upon [7]man,
If he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;
15 All flesh shall perish together,
And man shall turn again unto dust.
16 [8]If now *thou hast* understanding, hear this:
Hearken to the voice of my words.
17 Shall even one that hateth right govern?
And wilt thou condemn him that is just *and* mighty?
18 [9]Is it *fit* to say to a king, *Thou art* vile?
Or to nobles, *Ye are* wicked?
19 *How much less to* him that respecteth not the persons of princes,
Nor regardeth the rich more than the poor?
For they all are the work of his hands.
20 In a moment they die, [10]even at midnight;
The people are shaken and pass away,
And the mighty are taken away without hand.
21 For his eyes are upon the ways of a man,
And he seeth all his goings.
22 There is no darkness, nor shadow of death,
Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.
23 For he needeth not further to consider a man,
That he should go before God in judgement.
24 He breaketh in pieces mighty men [11]*in ways* past finding out,
And setteth others in their stead.
25 Therefore he taketh knowledge of their works;
And he overturneth them in the night, so that they are [12]destroyed.
26 He striketh them as wicked men
[13]In the open sight of others;
27 Because they turned aside from following him,
And would not have regard to any of his ways:

28 [14]So that they caused the cry of the poor to come unto him,
And he heard the cry of the afflicted.
29 When he giveth quietness, who then can condemn?
And when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?
Whether *it be done* unto a nation, or unto a man, alike:
30 That the godless man reign not,
That there be none to ensnare the people.
31 For hath any said unto God,
I have borne *chastisement*, [15]I will not offend *any more*:
32 That which I see not teach thou me:
If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more?
33 Shall his recompence be as thou wilt, that thou refusest it?
For thou must choose, and not I:
Therefore speak what thou knowest.
34 Men of understanding will say unto me,
Yea, every wise man that heareth me:
35 Job speaketh without knowledge,
And his words are without wisdom.
36 Would that Job were tried unto the end,
Because of his answering like wicked men.
37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin,
He clappeth his hands among us,
And multiplieth his words against God.

[1] Or, *Should I lie against my right?* [2] Heb. *Mine arrow.*
Or, *consent with* See Ps 50[18]. [4] Or, *laid* upon him
[5] According to another reading, *If he cause his heart to return unto himself.* [6] Or, *upon himself*
[7] Heb. *him.* [8] Or, *Only understand*
[9] Or, as read by some ancient versions, *Who saith to . . . vile*, and *to . . . wicked; that respecteth &c.*
[10] Or, *and at midnight the people &c.*
[11] Or, *without inquisition* [12] Heb. *crushed.*
[13] Heb. *In the place of beholders.*
[14] Or, *That they might cause . . . and that he might hear*
[15] Or, *though I offend not*

While it is Elihu's distinction that he offers a new solution of the enigma of suffering, he is as far as any of the friends from understanding the hero of the drama or the thoughts of the poet. That he should mistake Job the doubter for a scorner and a companion of wicked men, follows naturally from his first principles, for his doctrine of God's retributive justice is essentially the same as that of the friends. 'The work of a man shall He render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways' (v.[11])—these are words which might have been uttered by any of the three. But Elihu has a more fertile mind than the older disputants, and

while, in his endeavour to vindicate the righteousness of God, he emphasises certain points which are interesting without being convincing, he states one argument of real weight and value. In a brief but very remarkable passage (vv.[14. 15]) in which his doctrine of the indwelling spirit again becomes prominent, he proves that, as the Creator and Preserver of the world, God displays high and gracious qualities which are incompatible with injustice. Yet Elihu himself is unjust to Job. Faith is so easy to his own devout nature, that the doubts of other minds are beyond his comprehension. With the friends he agrees that the only right attitude of suffering man—who is always sinning man—towards God is that of pious submission to His will. To murmur is as bad as usurping His rule, or at least as claiming the right to dictate to Him. Holding these principles, Elihu is obliged to condemn Job as a man without true wisdom, who adds rebellion to his sin and multiplies words against God.

2 **Hear my words, ye wise men.** Elihu thus addresses the friends, whose claim to wisdom he does not dispute, in spite of his adverse criticism in $32^{7ff.}$. There is no reason to suppose (notwithstanding vv.[10. 34]) that a circle of spectators and listeners has gathered round the disputants,[1] and that Elihu addresses every one in this audience who might be called wise.[2] But that the poet had his readers in view, may well have been the case. **Ye that have knowledge** is one word in Heb. (יְדֵעִים), and the term is specially applied to those who have knowledge of God and duty. As a parallel to 'ye wise,' we might translate 'ye prudent.'

3 **For the ear trieth words.** This is one of a good many verses which Elihu borrows from Eliphaz (12^{11}).

4 **Let us choose for us that which is right** (מִשְׁפָּט, lit. judgment). The words of this verse, which were doubtless often on the lips of masters surrounded by their disciples, have the same ring as St. Paul's injunction, 'Choose all things, hold fast that which is good' (1 Th 5^{21}). The ultimate criterion of truth was not the decision of a council, but the verdict of the enlightened mind and conscience of individuals.

5, 6 In these verses, Elihu again quotes passages from Job

[1] Delitzsch, ii. 246. [2] Budde, 201.

for the purpose of refuting them. **I am accounted a liar**: lit. 'I lie,' meaning 'they say I lie,' or (ironically), 'I have to be a liar'; cf. 'I have to be guilty,' in 9^{29}. **My wound** is lit. 'my arrow' (חִצִּי, which may, however, be a clerical error for מַכָּתִי, my wound).

6 **What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?** The figure is borrowed from Eliphaz (15^{16}). Some expositors[1] praise the 'fine moral tact' with which Elihu detects what is faulty in Job's tone and bearing, but what is conspicuous in all his judgments of the hero of the drama is rather the tactlessness with which he confounds earnest doubt with flippant scorn, the purblindness which fails to perceive that, in spite of all the fierce flaming up of rebellion under the torture of life's mystery, Job's heart beats true to God and to all that is noblest and best in life. Elihu's limited mind has been shocked at the scepticism of chs. 9 and 10, but it has not understood the spiritual passion of ch. 19 nor the moral idealism of chs. 29 and 31.

8 The language of this verse recalls Ps 1^{1}. Elihu resembles all the friends in his readiness to make groundless assumptions and to draw illogical inferences. Job is a scorner, therefore he confederates **with the workers of iniquity**, and walks **with wicked men.** He has never, it is true, been *seen* to do these things, except in imagination, but one who is perplexed in faith *must* be impure in deeds.

9 **It profiteth a man nothing.** This is a paraphrase, though not quite a fair one, of Job's oft-repeated assertion that the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. Probably Elihu has especially in view the suppressed ch. 24 on the adversity of the godly. Though he raises the question of the profitableness of religion at this point, he reserves the discussion of it for his next speech. Here he gathers together all his energies for a defence of the righteousness of God.

10–12 Having first expressed his instinctive abhorrence of the blasphemous idea that God is unrighteous, he asserts, positively, that God renders justice to every man, and, negatively, that of a truth (אָמְנָם, a strong 'amen' or 'verily') He does not

[1] *e.g.* Cox, 443.

pervert justice. The words 'God' and 'the Almighty' are uttered twice (vv.[10. 12]) with strong emphasis and great solemnity. God, the Judge of all the earth, unjust! The thought (as Butler also says) contradicts one of our most primary instincts. But the instinct is no less strong in Job than in his friends or in Elihu, and the theme of this drama of the soul is the conflict between his instinct and his reason. With the words of repugnance, 'Far be it from God (חָלִלָה לָאֵל) that he should do wickedness,' compare Paul's indignant question and answer, 'Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid' (μὴ γένοιτο, Ro 9^{14}). [10a] being metrically too long for one line and too short for two, Bickell proposes to read, 'Therefore, ye wise, give ear, Hearken unto me, ye men of understanding' (lit. 'of heart,' cf. 9^{4}).

13 **Who gave him a charge over the earth?** Bickell and Budde read, 'Who entrusted His earth to Him' (אַרְצוֹ instead of אַרְצָה). Elihu's first argument is that God is just because His lofty and central position makes Him disinterested. If He were a viceroy governing a distant province, He might, as many experiences taught the Jews, find injustice profitable to Himself though ruinous to His charge; but, being the King of nations, He is beyond temptation. The analogy is imperfect, for it not only suggests the idea that God's ethics are relative and utilitarian (cf. 22^{2}), but it prompts the question, Had not Cyrus and Caesar their own temptations, though not those of satraps and proconsuls? **Or who hath disposed the whole world?** 'Disposed' (lit. 'laid' or 'set') does not give a good sense. 'Laid upon Him' (marg.) is better, but 'upon Him' has to be supplied. Budde makes an excellent suggestion, 'Who keepeth watch over (שָׁמַר for שָׂם) the whole world?' Who is its sole Guardian? Duhm transfers 'His heart' from the next verse, where it is metrically superfluous, and reads, 'Who setteth His heart upon the whole world?'

14, 15 The Heb. text of v.[14] is in some disorder, and it is evident that 'His spirit' and 'his breath' should not be in the same line. With the help of the LXX (which must have read יָשִׁיב, He restores, instead of יָשִׂים, He sets), many scholars render, 'If He cause His spirit to return to him, And gather His breath to Himself, All flesh shall perish together, And man shall

turn again unto dust.' Budde rightly calls this one of the most beautiful and striking passages in the OT. It teaches that the transcendent God is also the immanent God, sustaining all life by His animating breath, so that, if He were suddenly to withdraw His spirit, all life would perish, and the world become a barren desert. Age after age His mercy endures, the gift of His vitalising spirit is never withdrawn, and the conclusion that He will deal reasonably, righteously, faithfully with the work of His hands is almost irresistible. This same argument for the justice of God from His creatorship was developed by Job (10[8-12]), not in reference to 'all flesh,' but in reference to one man, himself—'Thou hast made him; Thou art just';[1] and if he is compelled for a time to suppose that even the Creator and Sustainer of his life is unjust and cruel, it is the further and deeper contemplation of the benevolence of God displayed in nature, and especially in animated nature, that ultimately brings him back from doubt to faith.

17 **Shall even one that hateth right rule?** From the category of creatorship and its responsibilities, Elihu reverts to that of sovereignty, and his reasoning at once becomes less cogent. He argues that, as righteousness alone guarantees the permanence of a government, as equity is the bond without which society must sink into anarchy and confusion, therefore God, whose rule is unchanging, must be just. The answer is that many governments which place their own interests far above the claims of abstract justice still contrive to persist. To say that any rule, human or divine, must be right because it maintains itself, is little more than another way of affirming that might is right. If the king is merely 'he who can,' he is as likely as not to be a despot. Job's argument against the righteousness of God was the moral disorder of the world. Elihu's confusion of thought on this subject is indicated by his next naïve question, **And wilt thou condemn him that is just** *and* **mighty?** lit. 'condemn the Just Mighty' (צַדִּיק כַּבִּיר), the adjectives standing side by side without a conjunction, as in the Latin 'Jupiter optimus maximus.' The question involves a *petitio principii*. 'Certainly not,' Job would answer, 'but *is* the Mighty just?'

[1] A parallel expression from *In Memoriam*.

18, 19 Here the Syriac, LXX, and Vulgate enable us to restore the original text, 'Who (God) saith (הָאֹמֵר instead of הַאֲמֹר) to a king, Thou art vile, And to nobles, Ye are wicked; Who respecteth not the person of princes,' etc. Elihu reasons that as kings, nobles and princes, rich and poor are all the work of God's hands, therefore God will be impartial. Job would follow the argument heartily if the conclusion were, 'Therefore he ought to be impartial.' But a world full of unmerited suffering, which Elihu and his school still interpret as punishment, awakens many doubts.

20 To prove that God is impartial, Elihu adduces the fact that the mighty suddenly and mysteriously perish, slain by no human hand. Vv.[19. 20] should form three distichs instead of two tristichs. 'The people are shaken and pass away' can scarcely be right, as the context indicates that it is the rulers, not the people, who perish. Budde changes 'the people' into 'the rich' (עָם into שׁוֹעִם); Duhm reads, 'They (the great) are torn from the people (מֵעָם) and pass away.' **And the mighty are taken away without hand** (לֹא בְיָד) means without any human agency, by the invisible power of God. Cf. Daniel's words, 'a stone was cut without hands' (2^{34}), 'he shall be broken without hand' (8^{25}), and the NT use of *οὐ χειροποίητος*, 'not made with hands' (Mk 14^{58}, Ac 7^{48}, He 9^{11-24} etc.).

21, 22 Elihu next argues that God is enabled to be just because He is all-seeing—because no darkness can hide the workers of iniquity from Him. This argument is also weak. Job has never questioned God's omniscience, but he has been driven to ask whether God's eye is good or evil—whether His is the watchfulness of a friendly guardian or of a cruel inquisitor (14^{16} etc.).

23, 24 Wright's emendation of v.[23] has been generally accepted: **For he setteth not man an appointed time** (יָשִׂים מוֹעֵד for יָשִׂים עוֹד), **That he should enter into judgement with God.** Elihu thus rebukes Job's often expressed desire to come into God's presence, plead his cause, and obtain a verdict. The reading adopted is confirmed by v.[24], 'He breaketh in pieces mighty men **without inquisition**' (marg.),

His omniscience rendering any special inquiry unnecessary. If Elihu meant, however, that Job, once a great man (1^{3}), now broken in pieces, was so evidently guilty in God's sight that he could be condemned 'without inquiry' (לֹא חֵקֶר), such a train of ideas was scarcely likely to relieve the doubts of a soul tortured by memories and experiences of divine injustice.

25, 26 In these verses, which teach the doctrine of retribution in the manner of the friends, the text is doubtful. In order to get a logical connection, 'Therefore' must be changed into **For**, or omitted as in the LXX. V.[25] reads like a gloss on v.[20], and the second line is wanting in the original LXX. **He striketh at them as if they were** (תַּחַת, in place of) **wicked men** is strange, because it is assumed that the mighty men who fall *are* wicked. Bickell and Budde change the preposition into a verb (תָּחֵת), insert a subject, and read, 'His wrath breaks the wicked.' **In the open sight of others**, lit. 'in the place of seers,' appears to be a weak equivalent for 'in the eyes of all the world.' Wright suggests 'in the place of the Shades' (רְפָאִים for רֹאִים), *i.e.* the underworld, which would imply that the wicked receive further chastisement in the realm of the dead.

27, 28 These verses state general reasons for the overthrow of the mighty: they are ungodly and they oppress the poor; cf. Eliphaz's fanciful indictment of Job in ch. 21.

29 Read, **When he keepeth quietness, who then can condemn?** If God chooses to remain silent and hide His face, men must not persume to criticise Him, or demand, like Job, that He should give account of His doings. In [29b] the parallelism requires some other question than 'who then can behold Him?' and Budde suggests, 'who can blame?' (יִסְּרֵנּוּ instead of יְשׁוּרֵנּוּ). [29c] reads strangely, and by changing the word 'alike' into a verb (יַחַד into יָעֵר or יָעַר), Duhm gets the rendering, 'Still He keepeth watch over nation and men,' which is followed in v.[30] by the words, 'That one of them that ensnare the people may not reign,' 'the godless man' being omitted as a gloss.

31–33 The best construction of this long sentence is, 'If any one say unto God, I have borne chastisement . . . Shall his

recompence be as thou wilt, that thou refusest it?' Job is asked in amazement if any man who uses the language of penitence will presume to dictate to God the chastisement which he should receive. Elihu, in polite scorn, declines to join in such impiety. The metre requires that v.[33] should form two lines. In [33b] Ley proposes to read (in the same strain as [33a]), 'For thou must choose, and not God!'

34, 35 **Yea, every wise man that heareth me.** These words do not imply that Elihu is directly addressing a larger audience than the three friends, though the writer evidently has a wider public in view. The Rabbi who stands behind Elihu is confident that all wise men, when they read his words and weigh his arguments, will be swift to dissociate themselves in spirit from Job, as a man who has no claims to knowledge or wisdom. At the bar of rabbinism, the hero of the poem is condemned. But time has its strange revenges. Rabbinism and its works are forgotten, or remembered only by those who are themselves more or less Rabbis, while the book which enshrines the questionings and the faith of Job lives for ever. History presents many parallels. The 'immortals' of the French Academy had no place in their ranks for Molière; but the tables are turned, and he is the immortal. 'Securus judicat orbis terrarum.'

36 **Would that Job were tried unto the end.** If the Heb. text is right, Elihu in his irritation expresses the truculent wish that Job's trials may be continued to the last (lit. 'for ever'), *i.e.* till he recants, or, if he does not recant, till he dies. That is the spirit of the Inquisition and the Star Chamber—the policy of 'thorough.' One is glad to find that the LXX suggests a much milder reading, 'Take a lesson, O Job' (*μάθε*, perhaps from הִוָּחֵר, Be instructed or admonished), which is like the appeal of some Rabbi to an exceptionally wilful and opinionative pupil.

37 **For he addeth rebellion unto his sin.** The tone in which this is spoken naturally depends on the text of v.[36]. If the Heb. of that verse is right, the most serious view is taken of Job's rebellion, derisive hand-clapping, and multiplied blasphemies, for he is regarded as a dangerous and incorrigible heretic. If the Greek is correct, he is treated with lofty rabbinical scorn, as a fool who may yet learn wisdom. The second

line, 'He clappeth his hands among us,' is metrically too short. Bickell reduces the three lines to a distich by reading, 'For he addeth unto his sin, And multiplieth his words against God.'

XXXV. 1–16.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

1 Moreover Elihu answered and said,
2 Thinkest thou this to be *thy* right,
Or sayest thou, My righteousness is more than God's,
3 That thou sayest, What advantage will it be unto thee?
And, What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?
4 I will answer thee,
And thy companions with thee.
5 Look unto the heavens, and see;
And behold the skies, which are higher than thou.
6 If thou hast sinned, what doest thou against him?
And if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?
7 If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?
Or what receiveth he of thine hand?
8 Thy wickedness *may hurt* a man as thou art;
And thy righteousness *may profit* a son of man.
9 By reason of the multitude of oppressions they cry out;
They cry for help by reason of the arm of the mighty.
10 But none saith, Where is God my Maker,
Who giveth songs in the night;
11 Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth,
And maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?
12 There they cry, [1]but none giveth answer,
Because of the pride of evil men.
13 Surely God will not hear vanity,
Neither will the Almighty regard it.
14 How much less when thou sayest [2]thou beholdest him not,
The cause is before him, and thou waitest for him!
15 But now, because he hath not visited in his anger,
[3]Neither doth he greatly regard arrogance;
16 Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vanity;
He multiplieth words without knowledge.

[1] Or, *but he answereth not*
[2] Or, *thou beholdest him not! The cause is before him; therefore wait thou for him.*
[3] Or, Thou sayest, *He doth not greatly regard arrogance. Thus doth &c.*

Elihu (or the poet to whom we are indebted for the Elihu speeches) is a teacher whose theological and ethical ideas have never been unified. He regards God now as an absolute Ruler, then as a faithful Creator, but he does not harmonise the two conceptions. He works with the category of divine transcendence or with that of divine immanence, but not with both at once. He adheres to the old doctrine that when a man is afflicted he is being punished, but it has also dawned upon him that when a man suffers he is being purified and perfected. While he dwells on one side of a truth, he constrains us to ask if he has forgotten the other. He has here the thesis and there the antithesis, but nowhere the higher synthesis. In the present speech he appears first as a worshipper of the God who is beyond the stars, cold and apathetic because so remote from all human interests—the God of the Moslem; and then as a worshipper of the God who giveth songs in the night, hallowing sorrow and making it the preparation for greater joy—the God of the Christian. It is vain to expect systematic thinking from such a teacher, and it must not be forgotten that Elihu is less an individual student of the ways of God than an exponent of the tendencies of an age, with a mind—

> 'Whose fancy fuses old and new,
> And flashes into false and true,
> And mingles all without a plan.'

So versatile a guide compels all his readers to be eclectics.

2–4 **What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?** Job's attacks upon God, according to Elihu, amount to no more than a complaint that, as a utilitarian, he has not found the service of God (and of goodness) profitable. Religion is a *quid pro quo*, and if a man does not receive his reward, he has the right to complain. That is the idea of religion which Elihu ascribes (wrongly) to Job, and with it he agrees. But he refuses to admit that God ever apportions to men anything but their dues. God is just, and Elihu undertakes to prove it to Job and his companions.

2 **Thinkest thou this to be *thy* right?** A man's **right** (מִשְׁפָּט) in a trial is the ground on which he expects to be justified. One might almost render, 'Is this your case?'

[2b] should probably run, 'Callest thou it my righteousness before God?' The same idea is conveyed in both lines.

3 **That thou sayest . . . What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?** But when and where did Job say that? One searches in vain for the chapter and verse. Job's complaint that he is treated as a criminal, and that there are many innocent sufferers in the world, is wrested into an assertion that virtue pays no better than vice. Such a doctrine appears to Elihu to undermine the utilitarian foundations of society. No one, he thinks, would be good if goodness were not profitable; no one would shun vice if vice were not unprofitable. It is here that Job and his creator differ *toto caelo* from Elihu and the good Rabbi who uses him as a mouthpiece. The Book of Job was not written for timid utilitarians, but for people who believe—whatever else they may doubt—that goodness is eternally and unconditionally good, and therefore hold it fast even in the extremity of suffering.

4 **I** (emphatic) **will answer thee, And thy companions with thee.** The word here translated 'companions' (רֵעִים) is elsewhere 'friends.' Elihu, however, is in so complete agreement with the three friends at this point that he proceeds to borrow his argument from one of them (cf. v.[5] with 22[12]). It is probable that all persons who share Job's doubts in regard to divine providence are viewed as his 'companions.' As in 34[2. 34], the writer evidently has his readers in view.

5–8 Elihu repeats a defective argument for the justice of God which has already been used by Eliphaz. Dwelling among the stars, God is too lofty to be either injured by the sins or benefited by the righteousness of so petty a creature as man. Being neither a loser nor a gainer by anything that His subjects can do, the great Sovereign of the skies is not tempted to swerve from rectitude. To Him the innocence or guilt of men is a matter of profound indifference. The argument is full of errors. Elihu exalts God's greatness at the cost of His grace, His transcendence at the expense of His immanence. He sets up a material instead of a spiritual standard of profit and loss. He does not realise that God does gain what He most desires by the goodness of men, and loses what He most loves by their evil. He makes God so cold, distant, apathetic, heartless, that he creates for the imagination an impassable gulf between heaven

and earth, and fosters the belief that a religion worthy of the name is for ever an impossibility. This is not the God of Israel, nor the God of whom Elihu himself speaks in the next sentences. **Doest**, which occurs twice in v.[6], represents two different Heb. words. With the Amer. RV one may read **effectest** in [6a].

8 **Thy wickedness** *may hurt* (lit. is for) **a man as thou art.** The implication of this half-truth is that human sin does not affect or trouble God, who metes out rewards and punishments with the cold precision of a machine. From a Prophetic or a Christian point of view, the ascription of such unfeelingness to God is self-evidently wrong. Imagine a true teacher saying to his pupils, or a father to his children, 'Your wickedness may hurt yourselves, but not me; your goodness may benefit yourselves, but not me'! Contrast Ps 95[10] 'Forty years long was I *grieved* with this generation,' and Zeph 3[17] 'Jahweh thy God . . . will rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in his love, He will joy over thee with singing.'

9, 10 The transition from v.[8] to v.[9] is too abrupt, and the beginnings of v.[9] and v.[10] point to a misplacement of verses. In the clauses **they cry out** (v.[9]) and **But he saith not** (v.[10], not 'none saith'), it is difficult to see who 'they' and 'he' are. Duhm thinks that v.[16] has been transposed, and would read after v.[8] 'Job doth open his mouth in vanity, and multiplieth his words without knowledge. But he saith not, Where is God my Maker,' etc. This gives an excellent sense. Elihu is here seen at his best. True, he is wrong in accusing Job of indulging in empty, worthless talk—of 'vapouring' (הֶבֶל, vapour, breath, **vanity**). But nothing could be finer than his conception of **God my Maker**, who is so far from forsaking or forgetting His servants in the darknesss of affliction, that He gives them **songs in the night**, reminiscent of past happiness and prophetic of future joy, to be sung by those who know that pain is not the indication of God's anger against them, but the token of a grace which would save them from all their sin and raise them to their full moral stature.

11 **Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth.** The chief distinction between the friends and Elihu is that they regard God as an arbitrary Sovereign or a stern Judge, while he regards Him predominantly, though not exclusively, as a

Teacher. 'Who is a Teacher like unto Him?' (36^{22}). His instruction, however, is naturally limited to those who are teachable. The beasts of the earth and the fowls of heaven are almost as sensitive as man; they suffer cold and hunger and disease; and 'the end of every wild animal's life is a tragedy'; but, inasmuch as they all live merely in the sensations of the passing moment, looking neither before nor after, they can discern no meaning in pain. Man, on the other hand, can not only learn fortitude from suffering, and deserve the sweet praise of bearing it well, but thank God for its healing and purifying ministry. Acknowledging the reality, the terror, the dominion of pain, he may yet gain the victory of the spirit over the flesh, and believe angel-voices which interpret it not in terms of justice and judgment, but in those of love and pity ($33^{23.\ 24}$).

12 It is very difficult to fit this verse, which evidently goes with v.[9], into the context, for when **they cry out by reason of the pride of men**, the writer appears to sympathise with them, not to blame them. It is not **they**, but an individual (v.[10]), **Job** (vv.[14. 16]), whose cry is chidden as vanity. Duhm thinks that vv.[9. 12] may be a marginal gloss upon $36^{7ff.}$. V.[12] means, 'There they cry by reason of the pride of men, but He answereth not.'

13, 14 **Surely God will not hear vanity.** Here a different word for 'vanity' is used (שָׁוְא), meaning emptiness, nothingness. V.[14] gives a specimen of the unreality which God will not regard. The Heb. words with which the verse begins (אַף כִּי) never mean, 'How much less when.' Read, **Yea, when thou sayest.** To call in question God's justice is to show a lack of that true religion of humble submission and implicit trust which alone receives a gracious answer from Him. In [14b] Perles and Duhm read, **Silence before him** (דֹּם instead of דִּין), **and wait for him!** This gives a good sense. Quietly trust God in the darkness as well as in the light, wait for Him to explain the insoluble enigmas of life. Apparent injustice may be justice incomplete; confusion, order incomplete; discord, concord incomplete. Wait and see that pain is no divine caprice—that there is a serious meaning in all suffering and sorrow. Cf. Ps 62^{5}, 'My soul, wait thou only upon God,' lit. 'be thou silent unto God.'

15 This verse should be a complete sentence. Either read

(with marg.), 'And now, because He hath not visited in anger, *Thou sayest*, He doth not greatly regard arrogance'; or (better) regard the whole distich as an exclamation, 'But now that His anger doth not punish, And that He doth not greatly regard arrogance!' Elihu expresses astonishment at the doctrine taught by Job in ch. 21, and proceeds ($36^{2ff.}$) to demolish it. **But now** (וְעַתָּה) serves often in the OT to introduce a new paragraph. The word for 'arrogance' (פֶּשׁ) occurs only here, and many scholars, following the LXX and other ancient versions, read 'transgression' (פֶּשַׁע).

XXXVI. 1–25.

THE DISCIPLINE OF SUFFERING.

1 Elihu also proceeded, and said,
2 [1]Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee;
For [2]I have yet somewhat to say on God's behalf.
3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar,
And will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
4 For truly my words are not false:
One that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.
5 Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any:
He is mighty in strength of [3]understanding.
6 He preserveth not the life of the wicked:
But giveth to the afflicted *their* right.
7 He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous:
But with kings upon the throne
He setteth them for ever, and they are exalted.
8 And if they be bound in fetters,
And be taken in the cords of affliction;
9 Then he sheweth them their work,
And their transgressions, that they have behaved themselves proudly.
10 He openeth also their ear to instruction,
And commandeth that they return from iniquity.
11 If they hearken and serve *him*,
They shall spend their days in prosperity,
And their years in [4]pleasures.
12 But if they hearken not, they shall perish by [5]the sword,
And they shall die without knowledge.

13 But they that are godless in heart lay up anger:
They cry not for help when he bindeth them.
14 [6]They die in youth,
And their life *perisheth* [7]among the [8]unclean.
15 He delivereth the afflicted [9]by his affliction,
And openeth their ear [10]in oppression.
16 Yea, he would have [11]led thee away [12]out of distress
Into a broad place, where there is no straitness;
And that which is set on thy table should be full of fatness.
17 But thou [13]art full of the judgement of the wicked:
Judgement and justice take hold *on thee.*
18 [14]Because there is wrath, beware lest thou be [15]led away by
thy sufficiency;
Neither let the greatness of the ransom turn thee aside.
19 [16]Will thy riches suffice, [17]*that thou be* not in distress,
Or all the forces of *thy* strength?
20 Desire not the night,
When peoples [18]are cut off in their place.
21 Take heed, regard not iniquity:
For this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.
22 Behold, God doeth loftily in his power:
Who is a teacher like unto him?
23 Who hath enjoined him his way?
Or who can say, Thou hast wrought unrighteousness?
24 Remember that thou magnify his work,
Whereof men have sung.
25 All men have looked thereon;
Man beholdeth it afar off.

[1] Heb. *Wait for.*
[2] Heb. there are *yet words for God.*
[3] Heb. *heart.*
[4] Or, *pleasantness*
[5] Or, *weapons*
[6] Heb. *Their soul dieth.*
[7] Or, *like*
[8] Or, *sodomites* See Dt 23[17].
[9] Or, *in*
[10] Or, *by adversity*
[11] Or, *allured thee*
[12] Heb. *out of the mouth of.*
[13] Or, *hast filled up*
[14] Or, *For beware lest wrath lead thee away into mockery*
[15] Or, *allured*
[16] Or, *Will thy cry avail*
[17] Or, *that are without stint*
[18] Heb. *go up.*

Proceeding with his theodicy, Elihu again emphasises his distinctive doctrine of the educational value of suffering. God is an incomparable Teacher. Despising only the stubborn in heart, He always gives to the humble their right. His chastisement is designed for the moral welfare of men, and nothing but their own folly thwarts His purpose. He is ever seeking to quicken their spiritual senses—to open their eyes to

see their sins and their ears to receive instruction. He does not arbitrarily grieve men, but delivers the afflicted by their affliction, and wins for Himself a hearing through their adversity. The one thing which men must shun above all else is that fretful impatience under the discipline of life which frustrates His merciful design. It can never be right to doubt and question His justice; it is always man's duty to magnify and praise Him.

2–4 Elihu does not forget that he is justifying the ways of God—ascribing righteousness to his Maker. He will not utter commonplaces, but fetch his knowledge from afar, making a wide survey of history and nature. He protests that he speaks not only in sincerity, but with perfect knowledge, an extravagant claim which seems the more presumptuous and indeed absurd because, in the next chapter (37^{16}), he applies the epithet 'perfect in knowledge' to God. As an Oriental speaker he is allowed a certain licence which would never be conceded in the West; and, of course, he does not mean to claim universal knowledge, but only a wise man's complete understanding of a theodicy which will dispose of Job's sceptical complaints of divine injustice. Two words in v.^{2}—those translated 'suffer' and 'I will shew thee' (כַּתֵּר and אֲחַוֶּךָּ)—are Aramaic, indicating the lateness of the Elihu discourses.

5 The text of this verse cannot be right. The verb 'despiseth' has no object; the second line is metrically too short and grammatically impossible, and the repetition of 'mighty' is probably due to dittography. Duhm (followed by Beer and others) reads, 'Behold, God despiseth the stubborn in heart' (כַּבִּיר לֵב instead of כַּבִּיר לֵב). This line now forms a distich with 6^{a}, while 6^{b} and 7^{a} go together. Elihu does not make the fine general statement that God counts none of His creatures beneath His notice; he merely contrasts God's contempt for the stubborn with His regard for the submissive. Elihu agrees with the three friends that devout men must always humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, accepting His providences without a murmur. While, however, the friends regard affliction as an ordeal and a punishment, Elihu regards it as a punishment and a purifying discipline. In 6^{b} read, 'He giveth to the humble (עֲנִיִּים) *their* right,' and in 7^{a} the LXX has, 'He with-

draweth not his right (*κρίμα, i.e.* דִּין instead of עֵינָיו, His eyes) from the just.'

7^{b}–9 The Heb. text, which suggests that the submissive will become royal and affluent as kings upon the throne, can scarcely be right. By simply changing 'with' into 'if' (אֶת into אִם) in 7^{b}, some scholars get a much better sense, 'And if kings were upon the throne, Whom He seated in glory, so that they became proud, And if they were bound in fetters, . . . Then He sheweth them their work,' etc. The word usually trans. 'for ever' (לָנֶצַח) probably means here 'in eminence,' or 'glory' (cf. 'the glory of Israel,' in 1 S 15^{29}). As a striking illustration of his doctrine, Elihu instances the disciplining of kings. By letting proud rulers be afflicted—'bound in fetters' and 'taken in cords' are metaphorical expressions—God reveals to them the true character of their acts, bidding them connect their suffering with specific transgressions,—the breach of laws which ought to govern their lives,—and especially with that vainglory which is the besetting sin of the great.

10 **He openeth also their ear to instruction.** But for the discipline of pain, many men would be impervious to the highest monitions. The best human teacher can get no audience of them until the Divine Teacher unstops their ears, and summons them, at once in judgment and in mercy, to **return from iniquity.** The word for 'return' (שׁוּב) is commonly used in the OT for repentance or conversion.

11 **And their years in pleasures**: better, 'in pleasantness,' or 'delight' (נְעִימִים, cf. Ps 16^{6}). Those who meekly accept the discipline of pain, and enter the service of God, spend the rest of their days, not in the gross pleasures of sin, but in an earthly happiness—parallel to prosperity in 11^{b}—which is felt to be the result and expression of the divine good-will.

12–14 Those who will not give heed to the discipline of suffering,—who, godless in heart, cherish resentment against God's providences,—who will not pray when He afflicts them,—die in ignorance, before their time, like the miserable devotees of unnatural vice. On 12^{a} see 33^{18}. The expression **lay up anger** probably refers not to the divine wrath which the wicked treasure up for themselves (Ro 2^{5}), but to the sullen discontent

which the godless or profane (חֲנֵפִים, the opposite of צַדִּיקִים, righteous) harbour in their own breasts against God's sharp dealings, not realising that He acts in mercy as well as in severity. The **unclean** (קְדֵשִׁים, from root 'holy') were the youths who were dedicated to nameless vice at the temples (1 K 14^{24} 15^{12} 22^{47}, 2 K 23^{7}, Dt 23^{17}), wretched hierodules whose early death apparently became proverbial. The LXX reading, 'And their life is wounded by **the angels**' (קְדֹשִׁים, holy ones), serves to show what startlingly contradictory conceptions of holiness have been entertained by the human mind.

15 In the second line read, **And openeth their ear by adversity.** This supplies the proper parallel to [15a]. Both lines now give perfect expression to Elihu's often-repeated doctrine of the significance and purpose of pain. God delivers the afflicted not only in, but through, their affliction, saving them by that from which they would fain be saved.

16 The Heb. text seems to mean that if Job had received chastisement in the proper spirit, he would have been led out of distress into abundance. But the tristich awakens suspicion of textual confusion. Making two nouns change places (רַחַב, freedom, and נַחַת, rest), and altering the untranslated word for 'under thee' (תַּחְתֶּיהָ) into the verb for 'terrify' (הַסִּיתְךָ), Duhm and Dillmann read, 'But freedom hath led thee away, And rest from (the mouth of) distress, No trouble which terrifies thee, And thy table full of fatness.' Just as affliction, which one instinctively dreads, may effect a man's deliverance, so liberty, ease, and abundance, which one naturally loves, may **seduce** one (הֲסִיתְךָ, cf. v.[18]).

17 **But thou art full of the judgement of the wicked.** Elihu does not refer to the resentful judgment expressed by the wicked against the dealings of God, but, as the next line shows, to the righteous judgment of God upon the wicked.

18 The marginal rendering of this difficult line is preferable, 'For beware lest wrath lead thee into mockery.' Still better, 'Because *there is* passion, beware lest it incite thee to mockery' (בִּשְׁפֹּק being changed into לִשְׁפֹּק, as the former would mean 'against' instead of 'to' mockery). In [18b] the sense is clear

and the language striking: **Let not the greatness of the ransom** (כֹּפֶר) which has to be paid, *i.e.* the severity of the afflictions which have to be endured, **turn thee aside** from paying it. Submit to the will of God, and surrender whatever He requires.

19 Here the text is very doubtful. With another pointing the word for 'thy riches' means 'thy cry' (שׁוּעֲךָ being changed into שַׁוְעֲךָ), and some read, 'Will thy cry put thee beyond distress, Or all the forces of thy strength?' For 'thy cry' Duhm suggests 'thy complaint' (שִׂיחֲךָ).

20 This verse is wanting in the original LXX, and both Budde and Siegfried indicate by asterisks that they regard the text as hopelessly corrupt. We have no right to interpret 'the night' as death. Making a series of ingenious emendations, Duhm gets a passable sense, 'Let not folly beguile thee To exalt thyself with him that thinks himself wise.'

21 The Heb. of the second line is strange. Changing 'this' (עַל־זֶה) into 'wickedness' (עַוְלָה = עַוְלָה), read, 'For thou hast chosen wickedness rather than affliction.'

22 **Who is a teacher like unto him?** Here the text becomes clear and simple. Elihu once more condenses his vindication of God into a single sentence, and this time into the best of all. God is the unique Teacher (מוֹרֶה), who by dreams and visions, by afflictions and angel-ministers, makes known His mind and will to men. The LXX has 'lord' (*δυνάστης*) instead of 'teacher,' but that is clearly wrong. The relationship of teacher and disciple suggests both the condescension of God and the affinity of man with God. The apprehension of such an idea would have radically changed the theology of Job's friends. It was their contention that suffering man should never make reply or reason why, since, as a servant who knoweth not what his lord doeth, he has no duties save active or passive obedience. But every disciple knows that he may say with the utmost reverence, 'Mine *is* to make reply, mine *is* to reason why.' Every true teacher encourages his pupils to ask a hundred questions and receive a hundred answers, though he may also have many things to teach them which they cannot yet bear.

23–25 **Remember that thou magnify his work.** When God,

the perfect Teacher, invites men to study His work, He wishes them to appreciate it, which they cannot do without judging it. Elihu, however, assumes that to judge God's work must always be to praise it. Standing afar off, seeing but a little and com prehending still less, man must content himself with being the spectator, and must never presume to be the critic of divine operations. Elihu does not see that while God can have little pleasure in the praise which does not discriminate, and which is often indistinguishable from flattery, He is far from being displeased with the inquiring spirit which asks in honest doubt if 'all's right with the world'—if, for example, it is just that the innocent should suffer like the guilty. Elihu's fondness for allusions to the Psalms (Job 33^{27} 35^{10}) suggests that his creator may himself have been one of the singers of Israel.

XXXVI. 26–XXXVII. 24.

THE MARVELLOUS WORKS OF GOD.

26 Behold, God is great, and we know him not;
The number of his years is unsearchable.
27 For he draweth up the drops of water,
Which distil in rain [1]from [2]his vapour:
28 Which the skies pour down
And drop upon man abundantly.
29 Yea, can any understand the spreadings of the clouds,
The thunderings of his pavilion?
30 Behold, he spreadeth his light [3]around him;
And he [4]covereth the bottom of the sea.
31 For by these he judgeth the peoples;
He giveth meat in abundance.
32 He covereth his hands with the [5]lightning;
And giveth it a charge [6]that it strike the mark.
33 The noise thereof telleth concerning [7]him,
The cattle also concerning [8]*the storm* that cometh up.

XXXVII. 1 At this also my heart trembleth,
And is moved out of its place.
2 Hearken ye unto the noise of his voice,
And the [9]sound that goeth out of his mouth.
3 He sendeth it forth under the whole heaven,
And his [5]lightning unto the [10]ends of the earth.

4 After it a voice roareth;
He thundereth with the voice of his majesty:
And he stayeth them not when his voice is heard.
5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice;
Great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.
6 For he saith to the snow, Fall thou on the earth;
Likewise to the shower of rain,
And to the showers of his mighty rain.
7 He sealeth up the hand of every man;
That all men whom he hath made may know *it.*
8 Then the beasts go into coverts,
And remain in their dens.
9 Out of [11]the chamber *of the south* cometh the storm:
And cold out of the [12]north.
10 By the breath of God ice is given:
And the breadth of the waters is [13]straitened.
11 Yea, he ladeth the thick cloud with moisture;
He spreadeth abroad the cloud of his [5]lightning:
12 And it is turned round about by his guidance,
That they may do whatsoever he commandeth them
Upon the face of the habitable world:
13 Whether it be for correction, or for his [14]land,
Or for mercy, that he cause it to come.
14 Hearken unto this, O Job:
Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.
15 Dost thou know how God layeth *his charge* upon them,
And causeth the [5]lightning of his cloud to shine?
16 Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds,
The wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?
17 [15]How thy garments are warm,
[16]When the earth is still by reason of the south *wind*?
18 Canst thou with him spread out the sky,
Which is strong as a molten mirror?
19 Teach us what we shall say unto him;
For we cannot order *our speech* by reason of darkness.
20 Shall it be told him that I would speak?
[17]Or should a man wish that he were swallowed up?
21 And now men [18]see not the light which is bright in the skies:
But the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.
22 Out of the north cometh [19]golden splendour:
God hath upon him terrible majesty.
23 *Touching* the Almighty, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in power:
And [20]in judgement and plenteous justice he will not afflict.

24 Men do therefore fear him:
He regardeth not any that are wise of heart.

[1] Heb. *belonging to.* [2] Or, *the vapour thereof*
[3] Or, *thereon* [4] Or, *covereth* it *with the depths of the sea*
[5] Heb. *light.* [6] Or, *against the assailant*
[7] Or, *it* [8] Or, him [9] Or, *muttering*
[10] Heb. *skirts.* [11] See ch. 9[9]. [14] Or, *earth*
[12] Heb. *scattering* winds. [13] Or, *congealed*
[15] Or, *Thou whose garments are &c.*
[16] Or, *When he quieteth the earth by the south* wind
[17] Or, *If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.*
[18] Or, *cannot look on the light when it is bright in the skies, when the wind hath passed, and cleansed them* [19] Heb. *gold.*
[20] Or, *to judgement . . . he doeth no violence*

'It is in the second part of this speech that Elihu displays the greatest rhetorical power, and the vividness of its descriptions has obtained the admiration of no less competent a judge than Alexander von Humboldt.'[1] He magnifies the work of God, who displays His power by drawing up the raindrops, distributing the clouds, spreading the light around Him, hurling the thunderbolt to its mark. God's energy is revealed in the storm, when He sends His lightning over the whole sky, and follows it with His majestic voice; in the fall of snow which suspends the labours of men and drives the wild beasts to their dens; in the formation of ice; in the poising of the clouds; in the heat and stillness which accompany the sirocco. In what words would one dare to contend with Him? The eyes of man cannot look at the dazzling light when the sky is clear; golden radiance comes out of the north; and the glory of God is terrible. His ways are unsearchable; but while He is majestic in power, He is perfectly just. Men ought to fear Him, and He pays no regard to those who are wise in their own eyes.

While there are striking phrases and memorable sentences in this poem, it cannot for a moment be compared in power with the divine speech which follows it. The poet does not know how to concentrate his mind upon an object, depict it as it is, and then leave it. He desultorily begins a sketch, turns away from it, and comes back to add some fresh touches to it. God draws up the drops of water, which distil in rain (36^{27}), and again He bids the showers of His mighty rain fall on the earth ($37^{6.7}$). He charges the lightning to strike its mark (36^{32}), He

[1] Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 46.

sends it to the ends of the earth (37^{3}), and again He causes it to flash in His cloud (37^{15}). The poet evidently made a careful study of the great divine speech, and put an imitation of it in the mouth of Elihu; but, fine though his work in some respects is, the general result leaves one in no doubt that there are higher and lower degrees of inspiration.

26 As the first line is very like 22^{8}, and the second introduces an irrelevant idea, many scholars regard this verse as an addition. It is wanting in the original LXX.

27, 28 In ^{27a} Duhm and Beer read, 'For He draweth up the drops from the sea' (נְטָפִים מָיִם for נִטְפֵי־מָיִם). In ^{27b} 'from His vapour' gives the sense evidently intended, but it requires a slight textual change (לְאֵדוֹ into מֵאֵדוֹ). In ^{28b} read, 'And drop **upon many men** (עֲלֵי אָדָם רָב). 'The author already knows that clouds are formed by exhalation from the sea, whereas the poet of the divine speeches does not yet know this, but assumes that God has somewhere His treasuries for the atmospheric elements. . . . The author of the Elihu speeches is some two centuries later than the poet, and it was probably through a Greek channel that he obtained some new physical knowledge.'[1]

29, 30 The idea of God's **pavilion** (סֻכָּה, booth) in the clouds is probably taken from Ps 18^{11}. In ^{30a} Duhm and Beer improve the sense by reading, 'He spreadeth **his cloud** (אֵדוֹ for אוֹדוֹ) around Him,' and in ^{30b} they change the meaningless words 'He covereth the bottom of the sea' into 'He covereth **the tops of the mountains**' (רָאשֵׁי הָרִים instead of שָׁרְשֵׁי הַיָּם).

31 The same thunderstorm by which God judges the peoples gives food in abundance. This idea is characteristic of Elihu, who never questions the judgments of God, but is always ready to see His mercies associated with them. The verse, however, disturbs the connection between v.^{30} and v.^{32}, and some others regard it as a later insertion.

32 **He covereth his hands with the lightning.** If the text is correct, the meaning seems to be that the hands which hurl the lightning are themselves hidden by it from human sight, —not an easy conception. Making some changes, Duhm

[1] Duhm, 174.

proposes to read, 'He places the light on a sling, And slings it to the mark.' 'The mark' is the translation of a slightly emended text (מַפְגִּיעַ for מַפְגִּיעַ). Retaining the Heb. text, Delitzsch reads, 'And directeth it as a sure aimer.'

33 Read, with almost all modern scholars, **His mercy announceth him, kindling his wrath against iniquity.** In the unpointed Heb. 'kindling' (מקנה) may be mistaken for 'cattle,' 'anger' (אף) for 'also,' and 'iniquity' (עולה) for 'that which cometh up,' or 'Him that cometh up.' Hence the curious reading, which even the Revisers retain, 'The cattle also concerning *the storm* that cometh up.'

XXXVII. 1, 2 Guided by the LXX, Bickell and Duhm (putting הֲלֹא for אַף, and לִבְּךָ for לִבִּי) read, 'At this doth not thy heart tremble, And is it not moved out of its place? Hearken thou (שִׁמְעוּ for שִׁמְעַ) to the noise,' etc. Instead of 'Hearken' the Amer. RV has, 'Hear, oh, hear,' an attempt to do justice to the Heb. idiom (שִׁמְעַ שָׁמוֹעַ).

3 A local thunderstorm was believed to be universal. God sends forth His voice under the whole sky, and His light (*i.e.* lightning) to the ends (כַּנְפוֹת, skirts) of the earth. Cf. 26^{11}.

4 The repetition of **voice** is probably an imitation of the seven voices in a great nature-psalm (Ps 29), though the effect is not quite so striking. 4^{c} is too long for one line and too short for two. Budde reads, 'And He stayeth not the lightnings (בְּקָרִים) When His voice maketh itself heard.'

5 This verse makes the transition from the thunderstorm to other natural wonders. The parallelism in the two lines is not good, and in 5^{a}, which at present reads like a mere variant of 4^{b}, Duhm (reading יַרְאֵנוּ for יַרְעֵם and cancelling בְּקוֹלוֹ) suggests, 'God causeth us to see His wonders.'

6 Instead of 'For He saith to the snow, Fall thou (הֱוֵא, an Arabising usage found only here) on the earth,' Siegfried and Budde read, 'Water thou' (רְוֵה). The next two lines, with their curious doublets, have evidently grown out of one. The Peshitto wants the second line, with the exception of the word for 'mighty.' Hoffmann and others read, 'And to the showers of rain, Be mighty' (עֻזּוּ for עֻזּוֹ). 'Fresh snow generally falls

on the heights of Lebanon and Hermon in November. . . . It ordinarily disappears, except from sheltered ravines, early in April; and yet the mountain tops are sometimes covered with fresh snow late in May. . . . Great rains are now needed to start the fountain and saturate the earth to the deepest roots of the trees.'[1]

7 **He sealeth up the hand of every man.** The work of the husbandman is suspended, his hand being shut as if sealed. The Heb., however, is strange (בְּיַד properly meaning 'with the hand'), and by making a very slight change (בְּיַד into בְּעַד), Beer, Duhm, and others get the simple reading, 'He shutteth men up,' preventing them from getting out in the wintry weather. In 7^{b} most scholars (changing אַנְשֵׁי into אֱנָשִׁים) read, 'That all men may know His work.'

9 If the Heb. text is right, the meaning is that the storm comes out of **the chamber** where it sleeps—'of the south' being an insertion. Duhm changes the word for 'cometh' (תָּבוֹא) into 'of the south' (תֵּימָן), leaving 'cometh' to be understood. '**The north**' (מְזָרִים) is properly 'the scatterers,' *i.e.* the scattering stars (rather than 'winds,' marg.), probably a constellation which, appearing on the northern horizon in the beginning of winter, was regarded as the bringer of cold, it being an ordinary Semitic idea that the stars controlled the weather. The Vulg. and apparently the LXX identify 'the scatterers' with Arcturus.

10 The cold wind, which is the breath of God, makes the ice, and the broad waters are frozen, lit. 'the breadth of waters is in constraint.'

11 There are difficulties in the text of both lines. The thick cloud is always laden with moisture, the verb 'scatter' (used of seed, arrows, and the like) is inapplicable to a cloud, and 'the cloud of his lightning' is a very strange phrase. Read, 'He ladeth the thick cloud with hail (בָּרָד instead of בְּרִי), And the cloud (עָנָן for עֲנַן) scattereth His lightning.'

12^{a} This line has no predicate, for 'it is turned' is lit. 'being turned.' It is probable that the line was originally two,

[1] Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 71, 72.

and that we should read (with Budde and Duhm), **And it** (the lightning), **turning round about, Is moved by his counsel,** or 'guidance.' In Gn 3^{24} the verb 'turning round about' (מִתְהַפֵּךְ) is applied to the fiery sword which guarded the way of the tree of life. The word for 'guidance' (תַּחְבּוּלוֹת) is used only in the plur., and found only in the Wisdom literature.

$12^{b.\,c}$ **That they may do whatsoever he commandeth them.** 'They' means the individual flashes. To say that the forked lightnings, which seem so random in their movements, obey the command of God (cf. 36^{32}), is a striking expression of the doctrine of universal design, a repudiation of the idea of chance. Many read, '**His** habitable earth' (תֵּבֵל אַרְצוֹ, as in Pr 8^{31}).

13 The first line cannot be right. Some emend by simply striking out 'or' and reading, 'Whether it be for correction for His land.' This gives a passable sense, but the use of 'His land' in two successive lines is improbable, and Duhm suggests, 'Whether it be for correction and for curse' (וּלְמֵארָה). The word for correction (שֵׁבֶט) is lit. 'a rod,' and it is characteristic of Elihu that he conjoins the symbol of punishment with mercy (חֶסֶד, grace, love), the same lightning being sent now in judgment and now in kindness. The poet's thoughts, however, are a little confused, for it is the thunderstorm in general, not the lightning in particular, that is here a curse and there a blessing. The word for 'cause to come' means properly 'cause to find' (as in 34^{11}; it is probable that we should read יוֹצְאֵהוּ instead of יִמְצָאֵהוּ).

15. The Heb. of the first line is strange, and the reference of 'them' uncertain. Probably the LXX gives the correct reading, 'Dost thou understand, when God doeth His works' (אֱלוֹהַּ עֲלֵיהֶם for אֶל פְּעָלָיו).

16 **Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds?** Budde thinks we should read 'the spreadings' (מִפְרְשֵׂי for מִפְלְשֵׂי), as in 36^{29}; but it is unkind to make Elihu repeat himself so often. Budde naturally regards the whole verse as an insertion, but the line contains one of Elihu's best phrases, expressing his wonder that the apparently unsupported clouds, bearing their burden of blessing for the earth, are poised aloft in air.[1] 16^{b} pro-

[1] See Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, v. 112–120.

vides no parallel to [16a], and Elihu has just been speaking of God's 'wondrous works' in [14b]. Making considerable changes, Duhm very cleverly reads, 'That pours down a deluge amid thunder' (מַפֵּל תְּהֹם מֵרַעַם).

17 **How thy garments are warm, When the earth is still by reason of the south** *wind*? (cf. Is 25[5]). 'We can testify that the garments are not only warm, but hot. This sensation of dry hot clothes is only experienced during the siroccos. . . . There is no living thing abroad to make a noise . . . the very air is too weak and languid to stir the pendant leaves even of the tall poplars.'[1]

18 **Canst thou with him** (*i.e.* like God) **spread out the sky?** The word for 'spread out' (Hiph. of רָקַע) means properly 'beat out' as a metal, and from it is derived the term for 'firmament' (רָקִיעַ). The Hebrews regarded the sky as a solid expanse, which they compared to brass (Dt 28[23]) or iron (Lv 26[19]), or, as here, **a molten mirror.**

19 Elihu now comes to his practical inference. If physical things are so mysterious to us, is it likely that we shall succeed in explaining God's moral order? We know not how to speak to Him, and at least we should not speak against Him—we cannot **order** *our speech*, *i.e.* contend with Him—and all by reason of the darkness of our minds. 'Dark is the world to thee, thyself art the reason why.'[2]

20 In order to make sense of the Heb. text, the word for 'say' (אָמַר) has to be translated 'wish.' If the RV is right, Elihu expresses the conviction, which he shared with Job's friends, that to contend with God is to court destruction. Making slight changes (יְסֻפַּר into יִסּוֹר, and אֲדַבֵּר into יְדֻבַּר), Duhm reads, 'Shall one cavil at Him when He speaks, Or doth a man say that He errs?'

21 In the present context the marg. is preferable, 'And now men cannot look on the light when it is bright in the skies, When the wind hath passed, and cleansed (Amer. marg. cleared) them.' The meaning would be that, if men are dazzled by the sun shining in a cloudless sky, they would be absolutely blinded by looking at the majesty of God. This translation,

[1] Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 536.
[2] Tennyson, *The Higher Pantheism.*

however, is very doubtful, and perhaps the verse (tr. as in text) should stand after v.[18].

22 **Out of the north cometh golden splendour.** It is doubtful if 'gold' (זָהָב) can be thus paraphrased, and many scholars read 'brightness' (זֹהַר). According to the Babylonian belief, God was enthroned in the recesses of the North, and after the Exile the Jews give frequent expression to this idea (Is 14^{13}, Ezk 1^{4} 28^{14}). The 'brightness' of the North is probably the Northern Lights, which may well have been regarded as gleams from the inner glory of heaven.

23 The lines of this verse are too long, and they ought to form three. Making a slight transposition, we may read, 'The Almighty we cannot find out, Majestic in power and plenteous in justice, And to the right He will do no violence.' Thus Elihu's teaching regarding God is that He is inscrutable, omnipotent, and just. In order to get a four-line stanza, Duhm puts ^{22a} ^{21b} ^{22b} and ^{23a} together, leaving a final quatrain, $^{23b.\ c}$ and ^{24}.

24 **Men do therefore fear him.** With Elihu, as with Job's friends, the conclusion of the whole matter is that man should bow before God in deep reverence, questioning none of His doings. God does not heed those who are **wise in heart**, *i.e.* wise in their own conceit, critics of divine providence. This is a final thrust, not only at Job, but at the poet, who lets God dramatically appear in the storm-cloud in order to answer Job.

XXXVIII. 1–38.

THE VOICE OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND.

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,
2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel
By words without knowledge?
3 Gird up now thy loins like a man;
For I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.
4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Declare, [1]if thou hast understanding.
5 Who determined the measures thereof, [2]if thou knowest?
Or who stretched the line upon it?

6 Whereupon were the [3]foundations thereof [4]fastened?
Or who laid the corner stone thereof;
7 When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
8 Or *who* shut up the sea with doors,
When it brake forth, [5]*as if* it had issued out of the womb;
9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof,
And thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,
10 And [6]prescribed for it my [7]decree,
And set bars and doors,
11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further;
And here shall thy proud waves be stayed?
12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days *began*,
And caused the dayspring to know its place;
13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth,
And the wicked be shaken out of it?
14 It is changed as clay under the seal;
And *all things* stand forth [8]as a garment:
15 And from the wicked their light is withholden,
And the high arm is broken.
16 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea?
Or hast thou walked in the [9]recesses of the deep?
17 Have the gates of death been revealed unto thee?
Or hast thou seen the gates of the shadow of death?
18 Hast thou comprehended the breadth of the earth?
Declare, if thou knowest it all.
19 Where is the way to the dwelling of light,
And as for darkness, where is the place thereof;
20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof,
And that thou shouldest discern the paths to the house thereof?
21 *Doubtless*, thou knowest, for thou wast then born,
And the number of thy days is great!
22 Hast thou entered the treasuries of the snow,
Or hast thou seen the treasuries of the hail,
23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble,
Against the day of battle and war?
24 [10]By what way is the light parted,
Or the east wind scattered upon the earth?
25 Who hath cleft a channel for the waterflood,
Or a way for the lightning of the thunder;
26 To cause it to rain on a land where no man is;
On the wilderness, wherein there is no man;
27 To satisfy the waste and desolate *ground*;
And to cause the [11]tender grass to spring forth?

28 Hath the rain a father?
Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?
29 Out of whose womb came the ice?
And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath [12]gendered it?
30 The waters [13]are hidden as *with* stone,
And the face of the deep [14]is frozen.
31 Canst thou bind the [15]cluster of the Pleiades,
Or loose the bands of Orion?
32 Canst thou lead forth [16]the Mazzaroth in their season?
Or canst thou guide the Bear with her [17]train?
33 Knowest thou the ordinances of the heavens?
Canst thou establish the dominion thereof in the earth?
34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds,
That abundance of waters may cover thee?
35 Canst thou send forth lightnings, that they may go,
And say unto thee, Here we are?
36 Who hath put wisdom in the [18]inward parts?
Or who hath given understanding to the [19]mind?
37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom?
Or who can [20]pour out the bottles of heaven,
38 When the dust runneth into a mass,
And the clods cleave fast together?

[1] Heb. *if thou knowest understanding.*
[2] Or, *seeing* [3] Heb. *sockets.* [4] Heb. *made to sink.*
[5] Or, and *issued* [6] Heb. *brake.* [7] Or, *boundary*
[8] Or, *as* in *a garment* [9] Or, *search*
[10] Or, *Which is the way* to the place where *the light is &c.*
[11] Or, *greensward* [12] Or, *given it birth* [13] Or, *are congealed like stone*
[14] Heb. *cohereth.* [15] Or, *chain* Or, *sweet influences*
[16] Or, *the signs of the Zodiac* [17] Heb. *sons.*
[18] Or, *dark clouds* [19] Or, *meteor* [20] Heb. *cause to lie down.*

Job ended his great monologue with the utterance of an intense longing to plead his cause before God; and so conscious was he of his innocence, that he ventured to say he would come near Him with the confidence of a prince (31[37]). At length the desired theophany is granted him. The almighty Creator, clad in the glory and the terror of the universe, more majestic and awful than Job had ever anticipated, speaks out of the thunderstorm. Clouds and darkness are still round about Him, and His speech seems at first as remarkable for what it leaves unsaid as for what it contains. He makes no apology for His dealings with Job, and seems to ignore his pathetic, importunate pleadings. He does not shed a single ray of light upon the mystery of his

sufferings, neither praising him for his supreme patience under the shocks of calamity, nor confiding to him how he has convinced the sons of the Elohim that men can serve God unselfishly, nor assuring him that the heaviest blows have been dealt by the hand of love, nor revealing to him the disciplinary and remedial value of pain. The Speaker gives no pronouncement on the burning question of retribution, but ignores alike the friends' accusations and Job's defence. He does not lift the veil which hangs over the gates of death, nor promise that the enigmas of the present will be solved, and its wrongs redressed, in an after-life. In truth, He scarcely touches the problem which Job and his friends have been so passionately debating.

And yet, while God speaks, Job is awakened as from a nightmare dream, to find himself again in a gracious world, full of reason, full of consolation; he is led to a sane and true vision of the relation between God and man; he recovers his devout and humble trust in the goodness which is at the heart of all things. He is given to understand that help and comfort are to come to him, not through a divine oracle, but by the exercise of his own thought. He is placed face to face with the immensity of nature, the infinite, overpowering phenomena of the complex universe, the unending miracles which pass before men's eyes day after day. He is plied with ironical questions, each of which admits of but one humbling answer. He is taught that man is not the measure of the universe, but an insignificant part of creation, a unit in the mighty sum of things, and that God's work is too vast in plan and execution for the human mind to grasp. Absorbed as he is in the baffling enigmas of his own life, he is reminded that there are equally insoluble mysteries in the great world around him. If nature is inexplicable, may he not expect that providence will be beyond his scrutiny and comprehension? From his dark doubts and brooding speculations he is summoned to a new reading of earth; invited to open his ears to nature's harmonies, to watch her ways and catch her free, glad spirit, to find in her peace a rebuke to his own perturbation of mind, in the majesty of creation a lesson of humility, in the eternal fact of the beauty of the world a fresh sense of the glory and the goodness of God.

Thus through the thunder there comes to Job the voice, not

of an Enemy, but of a Friend. The God whom he has regarded as cruel and despotic does not overwhelm him with fear, nor deny his integrity, nor suggest for a moment that the dogmas of his opponents and critics are true. If God casts him down, it is only that He may raise him up again in the strength of implicit trust. Job's heart, bleeding so long from the pang of desertion, faint with unutterable longing, is comforted with the assurance that his God has come back to him, nay, that He has never really forsaken him, and that human suffering is not to be interpreted as an indication of divine wrath. Once more personally conscious of God, who is great in mercy and truth, he asks nothing more; his sorrows are forgotten in a new apocalypse of divine loving-kindness; and his resignation is of that high order which readily merges into joy.

It is in the divine speech that the author of Job proves himself one of the supreme poets of nature, a writer gifted with descriptive powers almost without a parallel. Gazing at the great world as with a child's wondering eyes, and receiving its gifts with an understanding heart, he feels in it, like the finest of English nature-poets, 'a Presence which disturbs him with the joy of elevated thoughts.' The majesty of the universe, which oppressed Lucretius with a sense of the indifference of the gods and the misery of men, is to the Hebrew poet a revelation not only of the greatness but of the goodness of God. Imperfect as his scientific ideas necessarily are, the realities of the world yet disclose to him their true, divine significance, and, under the influence of an enthusiasm which is akin to inspiration, he feels and communicates all the witchery of nature with a kind of primeval instinct, recapturing in a higher and purer form those original elements of reverence for her powers which had long ago been crystallised into mythology. He realises that the world is vivified, not by a multitude of spirits, but by a single Divine Mind; and, if he rapturously enjoys nature, he never worships her, since he never pantheistically confounds the Creator with the cosmos. Whilst, however, the transcendence of the Godhead is the first article of his creed, he realises that God did not make the world in order to leave it, but that He fills heaven and earth for ever with the glory of His Presence.

1 **Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.**

These words are in prose, and the use of the divine name Jahweh, which is avoided in the Dialogues, makes it likely that they have been extracted by the poet from the Folk-tale which contained the Prologue and the Epilogue. In the original drama the line probably stood immediately after 31^{37}. God speaks at the right moment—as soon as Job is ready to hear. For 'the whirlwind' one may read **the storm** (הַסְּעָרָה), where the art. is generic, so that it would not be wrong to render 'out of a storm.' The OT contains many references to theophanies in thunderstorms (*e.g.* Ezk 1^{4}, Zec 9^{14}).

2 **Who is this that darkeneth counsel?** The word 'counsel' (עֵצָה) indicates that God does not leave things to chance; He has a well-considered purpose, though it may be beyond the comprehension of man. Whereas Job's personal afflictions, and the moral condition of the world around him, have tempted him to question the goodness of God, he must be convicted of speaking **without knowledge.** His perplexity arises from his own limitations. Given a fuller acquaintance with the facts of the case, he would see that the sum of things is 'a mighty maze, but not without a plan.'

3 In inviting Job to gird up his loins **like a man,** God uses a word (גֶּבֶר) which denotes man not in his frailty, but in his strength, man as a combatant. 'Like a warrior' (*Kriegsmann*) is Budde's translation. **For I will demand.** God accepts the challenge which Job has so often given Him (9^{34} $10^{2ff.}$ $13^{3.\ 13ff.\ 18ff.}$ $23^{3ff.}$ $31^{35ff.}$), and of the alternatives which have been set before Him—'Then call thou, and I will answer, Or let me speak, and answer Thou me' (13^{22})—He chooses the former, so that Job will have to answer.

4–7 **Declare, if thou hast understanding.** Here begins Job's humbling catechism, which exposes his ignorance and proves him incapable of criticising the divine plan. The work of creation is compared to the erection of a mighty fabric, of which the foundations are first laid. The **measures,** the **line,** the sinking of the **bases** (lit. the sockets), the laying of the **corner-stone,** all develop the architectural figure. It is an important truth that God 'wrought by weight and measure,' that law and order are visible in all that He has made. Of course, no

metaphor should be unduly pressed, and mechanical ideas of nature need always to be supplemented by vital and spiritual conceptions. Coleridge used to complain, not without reason, that the deists regarded the relation of the Creator to the universe in no other light than that of a mason to his work. This inadequate notion has ultimately yielded place to the doctrine of creative evolution.

7 **When the morning stars sang together.**[1] At the laying of the foundation of the temple, choirs of singers praised and gave thanks to Jahweh, and all the people shouted with a great shout (Ezr $3^{10.\ 11}$). And when God laid the corner-stone of the earth, His household of star-spirits—pre-existing sons of the Elohim—raised a shout of joy. In particular, the **morning stars,** which daily see the earth emerge from the darkness of night, then saw it rise out of the primeval chaos, and at the amazing sight sang in ecstasy together. References to this beautiful conception are very numerous in the poets. Shakespeare's words,

> 'There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim';

Milton's,

> 'Such music as 'tis said
> Before was never made,
> But when of old the sons of morning sang';

and Tennyson's,

> 'matin songs that woke
> The darkness of our planet,'

are examples. It was a Pythagorean notion that a music of the spheres, imperceptible to the human ear, was produced by the motion of the heavenly bodies; whence Goethe's 'In Bruder-sphären Wettgesang.'

8–11 **Or *who* shut up the sea with doors?** In primitive mythology the stormy sea is not a work of God, but a turbulent child of chaos, swaddled in folds of thick cloud and confined with bars and doors. In 8^{b} read, 'When it brake forth, *and* issued out of the womb.' The word for 'break forth' (גִּיחַ) is used in 40^{23} of a violently dashing river.

10 **And prescribed for it my decree.** As the verb (שָׁבַר)

[1] Here Blake's work (Design XIV.) is superlatively fine.

has nowhere else such a meaning, it is better to read as in marg., 'And brake for it my boundary,' the reference being to the abrupt and often rugged ending of the mainland. The phrase, however, is strange, and it is perhaps best to read with the LXX and Syriac, 'And appointed for it' (ἐθέμην δὲ αὐτῇ). Merx and Wright suggest that the verbs of [10a] and [11b] (שָׁבַר, break, and שִׁית, set) have changed place. For 'my boundary,' Dillmann and others read 'its boundary' (חֻקּוֹ for חֻקִּי).

11 As the first line is too long in Heb., Duhm omits 'shalt thou come,' and increases the effect by reading, **And said, Hitherto, and no further.** Bickell less happily strikes out 'and no further.' The Heb. of [11b] is impossible, and many scholars read, with the LXX, 'And here shall thy proud waves be broken' (συντριβήσεται = יִשָּׁבֵר, see end of last note). Others suggest 'shall thy proud waves rest' (יִשְׁבַּת).

12–15 The miracle of the dawn. Has Job appointed for the morning its time, or for the dayspring its place in the eastern sky? **Since thy days** *began* is ironical, man's brief life being contrasted with the world's long ages and God's eternity. 'The ends of the earth' are lit. its 'skirts' (see 37^3). **And the wicked are shaken out of it.** The personified Dawn is represented as seizing the coverlet of darkness under which the earth has been sleeping, and shaking the wicked out of it like flies.

14, 15 **It is changed as clay under the seal.** At sunrise the dark and featureless earth suddenly stands forth in as clear relief as the shapeless clay when it receives the impression of a seal. If the word for **a garment** is differently pointed (כְּבוּשׁ for לְבוּשׁ), [14b] reads, 'And they (the wicked) stand as if in shame.' The daylight of the wicked ([15a]) is the night; cf. a line of Schiller's Robber-song, 'Der Mond ist unsere Sonne.' Many scholars regard [13b], [14b], and [15], in which the terrors of daylight for the wicked are described, as a marginal quatrain which has found its way into the text. The lines are irrelevant in an account of the creation, for as yet there were no 'wicked.'

16 **The springs of the sea** are the fountains by which the (imaginary) subterranean ocean feeds the visible sea (cf. Gn 7^{11} 8^2). 'The recesses (חֵקֶר) of the deep' are lit. what is to be

explored in it, the range of it. Has Job 'walked to and fro' (הִתְהַלָּכְתָּ) in those mysterious regions?

17 Has he had **the gates of death**—the gates of the place of death, *i.e.* of Sheol—revealed to him? (cf. Ps 9^{13}, Is 38^{10}). Here the Babylonian belief regarding the underworld remains unchanged. In the 'Descent of Ishtar' we read that in the place of the dead 'dust is on door and bolt.'[1] It is improbable that the poet wrote **gates** in two successive lines, and the LXX has the interesting reading, 'And have the porters of Hades (πυλωροὶ δὲ ᾅδου), seeing thee, crouched in fear?' The difference between 'gates' and 'porters' (שַׁעֲרֵי and שׁוֹעֲרֵי or שַׁעֲרֵי) is very small.

18 For **the breadth of the earth** the Amer. Revisers read 'the earth in its breadth.' **Declare, if thou knowest it all.** The LXX reading is better, 'Declare, if thou knowest how great it is' (πόση τίς ἐστι = כַּמָּה, instead of כֻּלָּהּ).

19, 20 Light and darkness are regarded as entities independent of the heavenly bodies, having their abode in the region where sky and earth meet; they are alternately led forth to fill the vault of heaven which rests like a hemisphere upon the earth, and then conducted home again. Is it Job, perhaps, who guides them? For **discern the paths** it is much better to read 'bring it to the paths' (תְּבִיאֵנוּ, originally תְּבִינֵנוּ, instead of תָּבִין).

21 ***Doubtless*, thou knowest.** Eliphaz uses similar irony in 15^{7}.

22, 23 Hail is part of the artillery of heaven. God keeps it in treasuries in order to use it against His enemies in the day of battle. At Beth-horon, 'Jahweh cast down great stones from heaven . . . they were more who died with the hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword' (Jos 10^{11}; cf. Is 30^{30}, Ps $18^{12.\,13}$, Ezk 13^{13}). Instead of the second 'treasuries,' Duhm would read 'treasure-keepers' (אוֹצְרֵי for אֹצְרוֹת).

24 **By what way is the light parted?** As the light has been dealt with already, and the poet does not (like Elihu)

[1] Jensen, *Die Cosmologie der Babylonier*.

repeat himself, many scholars read 'wind' (רוּחַ for אוֹר), which gives a parallel to 'east wind' in the next line. But as neither the 'parting' (distributing) of the wind nor the 'scattering' of the east wind is a correct expression, Duhm proposes to read 'cloud' instead of 'light' (אֵד for אוֹר) and 'fresh water' for 'east wind' (קָרִים for קָדִים).

25 **Who hath cleft a channel?** The meteorology is primitive. In the solid vault of heaven a channel has been cut, through which the waters of the upper ocean are poured down in a rainflood (שֶׁטֶף) upon the earth. In the second line read, 'Or a way for the thunderbolts,' lit. for the flash of the thunders. Every bolt has its track, along which it shoots to its mark.

26, 27 **To cause it to rain on a land where no man is . . . And to cause the tender grass to spring forth.** This remarkable quatrain (with which compare 'Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,' etc.) is a rebuke to self-centred man who presupposes that he is the sole object of the divine care. If the earth was made for him alone, it is sheer waste on God's part to send His rain on the thirsty desert **where no man is** (אִישׁ in [26a], אָדָם in [26b]). But we would adore instead of blaming Him if we could transcend our anthropocentric standpoint and see things as He sees them. 'It is this which caused Job to put his hand on his mouth—the truth that even the dry clod and the desert grass are dear to Him though no man is near them. Why should they not be? Why should I say that dew falling on a thorn in a desert is wasted, but falling on my flower shows proper economy?'[1] [27b] lit. reads, 'And to cause the growing-place of tender grass to sprout forth.' Bateson Wright and others substitute **thirsty ground** for the prosaic 'growing-place' (צֶמַח for מֹצָא), reading, 'And to cause the thirsty ground to bring forth tender grass.'

28 **Have the rain and the dew a father?** This verse is metrically superfluous, vv.[29. 30] forming a quatrain without it. In the two foregoing quatrains (vv.[24-27]) the poet finished what he had to say of the rain, and now passes to frost and ice. It is

[1] *Mark Rutherford*, 301 f.

probable that v.[28] is a marginal distich formed on the model of v.[29].

29 **And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?** Read, as in marg., **given it birth** (יְלָדוֹ). 'Gender' (now obsolescent) was ambiguous, being applied either to the male (21[10]) or the female (Gal 4[24] AV).

30 Read with marg., **The waters are congealed like stone.** The parallel line indicates the meaning, but 'are hidden' is the natural translation. Hitzig (followed by many others) derives the verb from a root signifying 'to be curdled' (חָמָא instead of חָבָא; whence חֵמְאָה, 'curd'). Ice is never seen in the lower parts of Palestine, and even above an elevation of 2000 feet it is so infrequent as to be a remarkable phenomenon.

31 **Canst thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades?** Here, and all through this and the following chapter, 'Canst thou' should be **Dost thou.** The ironical questions imply that some one does all these wonderful things; is it by any chance Job? The word rendered **cluster** (מַעֲדַנּוֹת either by metathesis or error from מַעֲנַדּוֹת, root עָנַד, bind) means either 'garland' or 'bands' (LXX δεσμόν). On Orion, see 9[9].

32 Read, **Dost thou lead forth the Mazzaroth?** Though plur. in form, Mazzaroth is treated as masc. sing., and therefore followed (in Heb.) by 'in his season.' Whether the word is identical with Mazzaloth (2 K 23[5]), meaning the signs of the Zodiac, or denotes some particular constellation (perhaps the Hyades), is uncertain. In [32b] Merx points the word for 'guide' differently (תַּנְחֵם instead of תַּנְחֵם), and gets the meaning, 'Dost thou comfort the bear over her young (lit. her sons)?' This would suggest an allusion to some myth now unknown.

33 'Knowest thou the ordinances of the heavens?' Better, **Dost thou determine?** The difference is merely one of pointing (יְדַעְתָּ instead of יָדַעְתָּ). To the question, 'Dost thou know the laws?' Job might conceivably answer 'Yes,' but 'Dost thou make the laws?' extorts a humble negative. The latter rendering is favoured by the parallel question in [33b], 'Dost thou establish the dominion thereof (*i.e.* of the heavens) in the earth?' a question which may refer merely

to the seasons and the weather, though it possibly implies a certain belief in astrology.

34 In the second line, Bickell and Duhm, following the LXX (which has *ὑπακούσεταί σου*) read, 'That abundance of waters may **answer** (instead of **cover**) thee.' This gives an excellent parallel to 'Dost thou lift up thy voice to the clouds?'

36 The meaning of the words translated **the inward parts** and **the mind** (טֻחוֹת and שֵׂכְוִי) is uncertain. The context indicates that they refer to physical, not to psychical, phenomena; but all renderings are conjectural. For the former term, Duhm suggests 'fleecy clouds,' and for the latter 'comet' or 'meteor.' They are apparently regarded as means of prognostication; and perhaps their **wisdom** is seen, not 'in their obedience to natural law' (*Oxf. Heb. Lex.*), which is too modern an idea, but 'in their always appearing a certain time before the outbreak of bad weather' (Duhm).

37 **Who can number the clouds?** The question does not suit the context, and in any case why should God *number* the clouds? Wright reads 'Who breaketh up' (יִשְׁבֹּר instead of יִסְפֹּר), which gives a good parallel to 37^{b}, 'Or who poureth out the bottles of heaven?' Duhm suggests 'Who spreadeth out' (יִפְרֹשׂ).

38 **When the dust runneth into a mass.** Budde thinks that the dust is formed into a mass, and the clods cleave together, *before* the rain, as the result of the drought; Duhm, that these things happen in consequence of the rain. The latter explanation is probably right, as the verb 'runneth' or 'floweth' (יָצַק, often used of oil and molten metal) implies the action of water.

XXXVIII. 39–XXXIX. 30.

THE MYSTERIES OF ANIMAL LIFE.

39 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lioness?
Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
40 When they couch in their dens,
And abide in the covert to lie in wait?
41 Who provideth for the raven his food,
When his young ones cry unto God,
And wander for lack of meat?

XXXIX. 1 Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth?
Or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?
2 Canst thou number the months that they fulfil?
Or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?
3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young,
They cast out their sorrows.
4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up in the open field;
They go forth, and [1]return not again.
5 Who hath sent out the wild ass free?
Or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?
6 Whose house I have made the wilderness,
And the salt land his dwelling place.
7 He scorneth the tumult of the city,
Neither heareth he the shoutings of the [2]driver.
8 The range of the mountains is his pasture,
And he searcheth after every green thing.
9 Will the [3]wild-ox be content to serve thee?
Or will he abide by thy crib?
10 Canst thou bind the wild-ox with his band in the furrow?
Or will he harrow the valleys after thee?
11 Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great?
Or wilt thou leave to him thy labour?
12 Wilt thou confide in him, that he will bring home thy seed,
And gather *the corn of* thy threshing-floor?
13 The wing of the ostrich rejoiceth;
But are her pinions and feathers [4]kindly?
14 For she leaveth her eggs on the earth,
And warmeth them in the dust,
15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them,
Or that the wild beast may trample them.
16 She [5]is hardened against her young ones, as if they were not hers:
Though her labour be in vain, *she is* without fear;
17 Because God hath [6]deprived her of wisdom,
Neither hath he imparted to her understanding.
18 What time she [7]lifteth up herself on high,
She scorneth the horse and his rider.
19 Hast thou given the horse *his* might?
Hast thou clothed his neck with [8]the quivering mane?
20 Hast thou made him to leap as a locust?
The glory of his snorting is terrible.
21 [9]He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength:
He goeth out to meet [10]the armed men.

22 He mocketh at fear, and is not dismayed;
Neither turneth he back from the sword.
23 The quiver rattleth [11]against him,
The flashing spear and the javelin.
24 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage;
[12]Neither believeth he that it is the voice of the trumpet.
25 As oft as the trumpet *soundeth* he saith, Aha!
And he smelleth the battle afar off,
The thunder of the captains, and the shouting.
26 Doth the hawk soar by thy wisdom,
And stretch her wings toward the south?
27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command,
And make her nest on high?
28 She dwelleth on the rock, and hath her lodging *there*,
Upon the crag of the rock, and the strong hold.
29 From thence she spieth out the prey;
Her eyes behold it afar off.
30 Her young ones also suck up blood:
And where the slain are, there is she.

[1] Or, *return not unto them*
[2] Or, *taskmaster*
[3] See Nu 23[22].
[4] Or, like *the stork's*
[5] Or, *dealeth hardly with*
[6] Heb. *made her to forget wisdom.*
[7] Or, *rouseth herself up to flight*
[8] Heb. *shaking.*
[9] Heb. *They paw.*
[10] Or, *the weapons*
[11] Or, *upon*
[12] Or, *Neither standeth he still at &c.*

Instead of directly answering the questions of the bewildered doubter, God has called him to raise his eyes and open his heart to the endless miracle of Nature, that he may be constrained to confess how little he knows of the wonders of the material world, of which he forms so infinitesimal a part. Summoned next, in imagination, away from the footsteps of man, and confronted with the mysteries of the animal kingdom, he is reduced to a still deeper sense of his ignorance. Half a score of God's creatures, most of them untamed and untamable, all of them endowed with wonderful instincts, are selected, and no modern painter of animal-subjects—no Landseer or Briton Rivière—ever depicted animal life so admirably with his brush as the writer of the Book of Job did it long ago with his pen. In describing the works of God—or dramatically making God describe His own works—he proves himself a consummate artist. So choice is the phrasing of each successive piece, so free and graceful the movement, so true to nature the spirit and atmosphere, that the whole series

constitutes a unique poetic gift from the Hebrew world. The portraits of the wild ass and the war-horse have never been matched. 'It is to this portion' of the drama 'that the student must turn who would fain know the highest attainments of the Hebrew genius in pure poetry, such as Milton would have recognised as poetry.[1] 'There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart. So *true* everyway: true eyesight and vision for all things; material things no less than spiritual. . . . Such living likenesses were never drawn since.'[2]

39–41 **Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lioness?** Better, **Dost thou?** Man would sooner destroy her and her cubs than satisfy their appetite; but God cares for them, and hears the cry of the young lions who seek their meat from Him. He has created, and He rules, a world in which there is room for them, and for thousands of creatures like them. These are mysteries, but facts; does not Job's philosophy therefore need some widening, if he is to be a competent judge of the works of God?

41 It is strange to find **the raven** between the lion and the wild goat; we should expect it to be named with the hawk and the eagle ($39^{26.\ 27}$). The name for raven (עֹרֵב), when otherwise pointed, means 'evening' (עֶרֶב), and Wright (followed by Beer and Duhm) reads, 'Who provideth his (the lion's) prey at eventide?' It is probable that the tristich was originally a quatrain. **His young ones** (יְלָדָיו), that cry unto God, naturally remain in their den, unable as yet to hunt. The subject of the last line has therefore been lost, and Duhm inserts as a third line Ps 104^{21}, 'When the young lions roar after their prey.' In the last line the LXX has, 'And wander in search of food' (τὰ *σῖτα ζητοῦντες, i.e.* לְבַקֵּשׁ instead of לִבְלִי).

XXXIX. 1–4 **Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth?** The line is too long, and the word for 'the time when' (עֵת) is probably to be struck out as a dittograph of the last two letters of the preceding word (הֵיָדַעְתָּ), or as a mistaken insertion from ^{2b}. The line then reads, 'Dost thou know the bringing forth of the wild goats?' The noun (יַעֲלֵי) is masc., but (if the text is right) must here be used as a

[1] Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 53. [2] Carlyle, *Heroes* (Pop. Ed.), 45.

fem. As there is no reason why Job should not know the fact indicated, Driver suggests that the verb means, 'Dost thou attend to and regulate?' This, however, is an unusual meaning of the verb, and perhaps we should transpose two letters (putting יְעַדְתָּ for יְדַעְתָּ) and read, 'Dost thou determine.' This gives an excellent parallel to the next line, which should run, 'Dost thou watch over (תִּשְׁמֹר) the calving of the hinds?'

2 As the second question admits of an affirmative answer, instead of a humbling negative, we should perhaps read (as above), 'Dost thou **determine** the time when they bring forth?'

3 **They bow themselves, they bring forth their young.** The verb translated 'bring forth' (פִּלַּח) really means 'to open,' the proper object to which is the womb, not 'their young,' which Bickell and Duhm therefore strike out. **They cast out their sorrows.** The word for 'their sorrows' (חֶבְלֵיהֶם) usually means 'their birth-pangs,' but the parallelism indicates that here it denotes 'their offspring.' Cf. ὠδῖνα ῥῖψαι in Euripides (*Ion.* 45), and the Arab. *ḥabal.*

4 Read, **Their young ones are healthy** (or **strong**). In [4b] the marg. **return not unto them** is better. These hardy creatures lead their own lives among the rocks of the mountains, far from the eyes of man, who is as unnecessary to them as they are to him. It is enough that God cares for them, lovingly planning every detail of their strange existence. If He is so kind to the wild goats, is it likely that He is the malignant Foe of man?

5–8 In [5a] and [5b] there are two names for **the wild ass**, the one Heb. (פֶּרֶא), the other Aram. (עָרוֹד), but in the parallelism they do not necessarily denote different species. This beautiful, untamable creature, whose existence the poet describes with a sympathy that betrays his own love of wild nature, perhaps his own weariness of the conventions of civilisation, is in every respect different from his domesticated slave-brother. Far from the throng of the city (הֲמוֹן קְרִיָה, cf. 'the madding crowd's ignoble strife') and the shouts of the driver (נוֹגֵשׂ, the taskmaster of slaves, 3[18], Ex 3[7]), he has his home (בֵּיתוֹ) in the illimitable desert. Shy and wary, swifter than the fleetest horse, and therefore easily evading all pursuers, he ranges the

mountains at will in search of his pasture. The living image of untrammelled freedom, he is no blot upon creation, whatever man, the utilitarian, may think. God describes His own work with delight, and Job learns that he must needs have an open, hospitable mind if he is to welcome, without foolish criticism, all the mysterious thoughts and inscrutable designs of a loving Creator.

6 One of the names of the wild ass's habitat is **the salt land** (מְלֵחָה), elsewhere an abstract noun, 'saltness' (Jer 17^6, Ps 107^{34}), here the concrete 'salt plain'; all wild herbivorous animals being naturally fond of licking salt.

9–12 **The wild-ox** (רֵים for רְאֵם), which was evidently well known to the writer and his readers, is named nine times in the OT. It was associated in thought with bulls (Is 34^7), it was of great strength (v.[11], Ps 22^{21}) and agility (Ps 29^6), and its lofty horns were regarded as a symbol of power (Nu 23^{22} 24^8, Dt 33^{17}). It was probably the *Bos primigenius* of naturalists, which is now extinct. There is much the same contrast between it and the domesticated ox as between the wild and the tame ass.

10 The awkward repetition of **the wild-ox** is probably a dittograph, and the LXX has only a pronoun. To make the word translated 'with his band' an accus. of instrument can scarcely be right. Duhm inverts the order of the words for 'band' and 'furrow,' reading, 'Dost thou bind him with the furrow-rope?'

13–18 The description of **the ostrich** is regarded by many scholars as an interpolation. The absence of the passage from the LXX, the position of the bird between the wild-ox and the horse, the altered form of address, and the reference to God (who is elsewhere the Speaker) in the third person, suggest a different authorship.

13 The word used here for ostrich (רְנָנִים, verb רָנַן, cry aloud) is either derived from the bird's cry, which is 'like the hoarse lowing of an ox in pain'[1]—or, more probably, it is a mere corruption of the ordinary word (יְעֵנִים, pl. יָעֵן). The word translated 'rejoiceth' (נֶעֱלָסָה) is disputed, and many emendations have been proposed, but **'flaps joyously'** (Amer. RV 'wings wave

[1] Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 110.

proudly') probably gives the sense. **But are her pinions and feathers** (used by metonymy for herself) **kindly?** 'Cruel like the ostriches in the wilderness' was a proverbial expression (La 4[3]). The word for 'kindly' (חֲסִידָה) was given as a name to the mother-stork, on account of her affection for her young, hence the marg. has 'like the stork's,' while the Amer. RV reads, '*But* are they the pinions and plumage of love?' As a translation this can scarcely be right, though the adjective would naturally suggest to the reader the contrast between the two birds.

14 **For she leaveth her eggs on the earth.** These words are ambiguous. Is the ostrich reproached for making no proper nest, but hatching her eggs in the bare dust, or for leaving them (according to the popular belief) to be hatched by the sun? The next verse favours the second interpretation.

15 **And forgetteth that the foot may crush them.** She 'lays an immense number of eggs, far more than are ever hatched, and round the covered eggs are to be found many dropped carelessly, as if she forgot that the frosts might crack them, or the wild beast might break them. But most naturalists confirm the statement of the natives, that the eggs on the surface are left in order to afford sustenance to the newly hatched chicks, which could not otherwise find food at first in those arid regions.'[1]

16 Read, **She hardeneth herself against her young ones** (marg.). Budde thinks that this applies only to the eggs; Duhm, that it self-evidently does not refer to the eggs. Here, as elsewhere, the ostrich's want of natural affection is exaggerated. The truth seems to be that 'the greatest care is taken to place the nest where it may not be discovered, and the birds avoid being seen when going to and from it, while they display great solicitude for their young.'[2] This rather conflicts with the next line, which reads lit. **Fruitless is her labour—no fear**; *i.e.* she has no concern, being so defective in maternal instinct that she does not care though her labour be lost.

17 **Because God hath deprived her of** (lit. made her to forget) **wisdom.** 'More foolish than an ostrich' is an Arabian

[1] Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 237.
[2] *Ency. Brit.*[11], art. 'Ostrich.'

proverb. The old notion that she hides her head in the sand and imagines herself safe, appears to be untrue to fact; but her habit of running in circles instead of straight lines, and against rather than with the wind, may justify the proverb.

18 **What time she lifteth up herself on high.** As her wings are used only to increase her speed, not for actual flight, 'on high' (בַּמָּרוֹם) is strange. Wright and Budde read, 'When the archers come (בֹּא מֹרִים), she lifteth herself up,' which provides an excellent parallel to 18b, 'She scorneth the horse and his rider.' Hitzig and Duhm read, 'lifteth herself up in the race' (בַּמֵּרוֹץ). The word for 'lifteth herself up' (Hiph. of מָרָא) is not found elsewhere, and may be connected with the Arab. word for to *whip*, to *urge on* a horse. It may therefore be conjectured that the meaning is, 'she beats the air,' or 'she flaps her wings,' or 'she scours along.'

19–25 The finest of all these pen-and-ink sketches is that of the animal most closely associated with the Arab, whose love of his steed is proverbial. Layard's striking words have been often quoted: 'Although docile as a lamb, and requiring no other guide than the halter, when the Arab mare hears the war-cry of the tribe and sees the quivering spear of her rider, her eyes glitter with fire, her blood-red nostrils open wide, her neck is nobly arched, and her tail and mane are raised and spread to the wind. A Bedouin proverb says that a high-bred mare when at full speed should hide her rider between her neck and her tail.'[1]

19 **Hast thou clothed his neck with the quivering mane?** The word trans. 'the quivering mane' (רַעְמָה) is found only here, and the meaning is 'very uncertain' (*Oxf. Heb. Lex.*). To render simply 'with the mane,' as Budde and Duhm do, seems too prosaic. **With terror** (LXX ἐνέδυσας δὲ τραχήλῳ αὐτοῦ φόβον) perhaps comes near the sense, and gives a parallel to **might** in the preceding line. The AV translation 'with thunder' (רַעַם is the ordinary word for thunder) cannot be right, as it is, of course, to the eye, not the ear, that the tossing mane is terrible.

20 **to leap as a locust.** In Jl 2^4, Rev 9^7 locusts are compared to horses; here the horse is likened to the locust.

[1] *Discoveries*, p. 330.

21 **He paweth.** The Heb. has 'they paw,' but this is evidently a mere clerical error; the LXX has the sing. **the armed men:** lit. 'the weapons.'

23 **The quiver rattleth against him:** better 'upon him,' *i.e.* his rider's, not the enemy's, quiver.

24 **He swalloweth the ground.** Horse and rider, charging the foe, career so swiftly over the ground that it vanishes as if swallowed up. **Neither believeth he that it is the voice of the trumpet.** If this rendering is right, the meaning is that when the horse hears the war-cry, he can scarcely believe his ears for joy. This train of thought seems rather too subtle for a horse, and the marg. gives a better sense, 'Neither standeth he still at the sound of the trumpet.' Cf. Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 32, 'Tum si qua sonum procul arma dedere, Stare loco nescit.' The objection to this rendering is that the verb (יַאֲמִין) nowhere else has a physical sense, but always means 'believe' or 'trust.' Bickell suggests, 'Neither is he stayed' (יֵעָמֵד). The occurrence of 'trumpet' in two successive lines raises suspicion as to the text. Duhm strikes out this word in 24^{b}, and proposes to read, 'Neither turneth he to the right nor the left.'

26 The word for **the hawk** (נֵץ) is to be taken as a generic name for smaller birds of prey, including the falcon. It is a question whether we should render, 'And stretch her wings towards the south,' or 'against the south wind.' In the one case the remarkable thing is the migratory instinct of the bird, in the other its courage in facing the blast.

27 The second line being metrically too short, as well as grammatically strange, Budde expands it, 'And maketh her nest high on the mountains.' By striking out **Doth the eagle mount up,** Bickell and Duhm reduce the two lines to one, 'Doth she (the hawk) at thy command make her nest on high?' The whole paragraph vv.$^{26-30}$ is thus made to refer to the hawk. It would be somewhat strange, however, if there were no sketch of the king of birds. We might read, 'Is it at thy command that the eagle maketh her nest?' (יִקַּנֵּן, Ps 104^{17}, Jer 48^{24}).

28 The repetition of 'the rock' is very awkward, and 'She dwelleth on the rock' is a quotation from Jer 49^{16}. The two lines should probably be relieved of pleonasms, and read as a

single line, 'And she hath her lodging upon the crag of the rock.'

29 **From thence she spieth out the prey.** 'The power of vision in the eagle is amazing, almost incredible. No sooner does a kid fall in the wilderness among the thick bushes, than some of these keen-sighted hunters after prey notice it from their pathway in mid heaven, and, circling round and round, they pounce down upon it and bear it away to their nest. This appears to be done purely by sight.'[1]

30 **And where the slain are, there is she.** Cf. our Lord's words in Mt 24^{28}, 'Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together,' and Rev $19^{17.\ 18}$.

XL. 1–14.

DIVINE IRONY.

1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said,
2 Shall he that cavilleth contend with the Almighty?
He that argueth with God, let him answer it.

3 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,
4 Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer thee?
I lay mine hand upon my mouth.
5 Once have I spoken, and I will not answer;
Yea twice, but I will proceed no further.

6 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,
7 Gird up thy loins now like a man:
I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.
8 Wilt thou even disannul my judgement?
Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be justified?
9 Or hast thou an arm like God?
And canst thou thunder with a voice like him?
10 Deck thyself now with excellency and dignity;
And array thyself with honour and majesty.
11 Pour forth the overflowings of thine anger:
And look upon every one that is proud, and abase him.
12 Look on every one that is proud, *and* bring him low;
And tread down the wicked where they stand.

[1] Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, p. 151.

13 Hide them in the dust together;
Blind their faces in the hidden *place*.
14 Then will I also confess of thee
That thine own right hand can save thee.

One of our poets has made a strange suggestion regarding a brother-poet:

> 'The Spirit of the world,
> Beholding the absurdity of men—
> Their vaunts, their feats—let a sardonic smile,
> For one short moment, wander o'er his lips.
> *That smile was Heine!*'[1]

Perhaps in antiquity that smile was the writer of Job, who realised that if doubt is often too flippant, it is sometimes too solemn. We should have more faith if we could laugh—and weep—at our own ridiculous notions. The divine irony, infinitely keen and yet infinitely kind, becomes most humbling at the close of the answer from the whirlwind. It invites the doubter to array himself with honour and majesty, mount the throne of the world, seize the reins of government, and use his power to abase the proud and send the wicked to their doom. Then he will acquire the experience which will enable him to pass an intelligent judgment upon the government of the world. For he will know what it is to be God,—will realise the amazing complexity of the universe, the endless multiplicity of the divine interests and solicitudes, the relation of each self-centred human unit to the mighty sum of things. And then it will be time for God to praise a man whose own right hand hath gotten him the victory! (Contrast Ps 98[1].)

1. **Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said.** These words have been inserted in order to introduce the brief dialogue in vv.[2-5]. They are wanting in the LXX, and should be struck out.

2 Read, **Shall a caviller contend with the Almighty?** The word for 'caviller' (יִסּוֹר, one who reproves, a fault-finder, a critic) is found only here. Though it has been rescued from oblivion merely by the apparent accident of its occurrence in a great drama, it was probably as common in the writer's age of bold questioning as the word 'higher critic' is in ours. **He that argueth with God, let him answer it.** The term for 'he that argueth' (מוֹכִיחַ) is often legal—the accuser (Am 5[10], Is 29[21], etc.).

[1] Matthew Arnold, *Heine's Grave*.

Only the man who can answer it, *i.e.* the whole series of questions asked in chs. 38 and 39, answering, of course, not in the negative but in the affirmative, has the right to frame an indictment against God's government of the universe.

3–5 On the dislocation of these verses see Introd. p. 26. As part of Job's Retractation, which was in all probability originally a single piece, they are interpreted at p. 346.

6, 7 These words were inserted by a later hand as the beginning of a second divine oration, whereas vv.[2. 8-14] formed the original conclusion of God's single address. V.[6] is a careless repetition of 38[1] (the art. is wanting before 'whirlwind') and v.[7] merely reproduces 38[3].

8 **Wilt thou even disannul my judgement? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be justified?** These searching questions naturally follow v.[2]. To disannul (הֵפֵר break, prostrate, make ineffectual) God's judgment is to deny His justice. Not content with asserting his own innocence, Job has challenged the moral government of the world. Because he cannot see God's equity in his own lot and in that of many other men, he condemns God in order to justify himself. The drama is designed to teach that 'God's righteousness and Job's innocence are consistent with each other. Even if the righteous government of God is not to be recognised in the outward fortunes of men, nevertheless the belief is to be held fast that He governs and governs justly. . . . The sense of communion with God which is awakened by obedience to the divine will, the testimony of the Holy Spirit, is to be enough for the pious. The nature of faith has never been more purely apprehended.'[1]

9–14 These verses clench the argument of chs. 38 and 39. If Job could take God's place and do His work for a little while, he would acquire the experience which would enable him to understand the perplexing rule of the world. But as there is so much in the divine operations which must for ever remain mysterious to man, he is guilty of judging without knowledge if he impugns the righteousness of God.

9, 10 **Or hast thou an arm like God?** Job is to be saved from doubt by an irony which reminds him of his limitations. He is invited to assume the prerogatives of God and undertake the

[1] Smend, 504.

government of the world. 'Pray, deck thyself with majesty and dignity, and array thyself with glory and state.' Men have often imagined how they would transform the world if they had the power.

> 'Ah Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire
> To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
> Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
> Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!'[1]

'If I were God' is the introduction to many a visionary's sketch of a better and happier world. But, with a wonderfully daring stroke of fancy, the writer of Job represents God as taking the initiative and inviting man's co-operation in the government of the world, if not as offering to abdicate in his favour. There is a somewhat similar irony in the Greek story of Phaethon, who obtained his father's leave to drive the chariot of the sun for a day, and nearly set the world on fire.[2]

11–13 Read, **Pour forth the outbursts** (עַבְרוֹת) **of thine anger.** The sarcasm of these verses is directed against the impatient spirit which demands the immediate destruction of the godless, as the condition of faith in the just government of the world. 'Be it so,' says the Voice from the whirlwind; 'let the advocate of swift retribution become the righteous judge, give vent to his wrath, abase the proud, and send the wicked posting to Sheol.' The irony implies that this, after all, may not be the highest and wisest mode of procedure. It suggests that God acts with more restraint. He who finds a place in His world even for the birds and beasts of prey, does not **tread down the wicked where they stand**—as the old theory of moral retribution required Him to do—and yet He may be none the less just. He does not, in His zeal either for His own honour or for righteousness, act like a petty human prince who decrees the instant execution of all his enemies. God's retributive justice is slower in its action; may it not be because He takes so much longer views and works for so much higher ends?

12 Evidently from an error in transcription, [12a] is almost the same as [11b]. In the LXX the repetitions are wanting, and Bickell

[1] Omar Khayyám, xcix.

[2] Mr. Chesterton uses the divine speech to justify his own controversial method. 'In the same book in which God's name is fenced from being taken in vain, God himself overwhelms Job with a torrent of terrible levities'! (*Hereticks*, 222).

and Duhm attempt to remove them from the Heb. Striking out 'look upon' in 11^b and 'every one' in 12^a, and substituting 'loftiness' for 'proud' (גְּבֹהָה for גֵּאֶה), they read, 'And abase all that is proud, Look upon loftiness and bring it low.'

13 Read, 'Bury them all in the dust, Bind their faces in the darkness.' The word for 'darkness' (טָמוֹן, that which is hidden or darkened) is properly an abstract noun, but here almost equivalent to Sheol.

14 Read, **Then will I** (emphatic) **also praise thee, That thine own right hand getteth thee victory.** The word for 'I will praise thee' (אוֹדֶךָּ) is the one ordinarily used by a worshipper who is lauding or giving thanks to God (Ps 18^{50} 108^4, Is 12^1). The divine irony could go no further. The doubter is supposed to seize the reins of empire, draw the sword of justice, and bathe it in the blood of all the wicked. He makes a solitude and calls it peace. He vindicates justice by emptying the world. It is now time for God to raise a pæan, either as the ancients did, 'Euge! macte virtute!' or as the moderns do, 'See the conquering hero comes!'

XL. 15–XLI. 34.

BEHEMOTH AND LEVIATHAN.

15 Behold now [1]behemoth, which I made with thee;
He eateth grass as an ox.
16 Lo now, his strength is in his loins,
And his force is in the muscles of his belly.
17 He moveth his tail like a cedar:
The sinews of his thighs are knit together.
18 His bones are *as* tubes of brass;
His [2]limbs are like bars of iron.
19 He is the chief of the ways of God:
[3]He *only* that made him can make his sword to approach *unto him.*
20 Surely the mountains bring him forth food;
Where all the beasts of the field do play.
21 He lieth under the lotus trees,
In the covert of the reed, and the fen.
22 The lotus trees cover him with their shadow;
The willows of the brook compass him about.
23 Behold, if a river [4]overflow, he trembleth not:
He is confident, though Jordan swell even to his mouth.

24 Shall any take him when he is on the watch,
Or pierce through his nose with a snare?
XLI. 1 [5]Canst thou draw out [6]leviathan with a fish hook?
Or press down his tongue with a cord?
2 Canst thou put [7]a rope into his nose?
Or pierce his jaw through with a [8]hook?
3 Will he make many supplications unto thee?
Or will he speak soft words unto thee?
4 Will he make a covenant with thee,
That thou shouldest take him for a servant for ever?
5 Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?
Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?
6 Shall the bands *of fishermen* make traffic of him?
Shall they part him among the merchants?
7 Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons,
Or his head with fish spears?
8 Lay thine hand upon him;
Remember the battle, and do so no more.
9 [9]Behold, the hope of him is in vain:
Shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?
10 None is so fierce that he dare stir him up:
Who then is he that can stand before me?
11 Who hath first given unto me, that I should repay him?
Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.
12 I will not keep silence concerning his limbs,
Nor his mighty strength, nor his comely proportion.
13 Who can [10]strip off his outer garment?
Who shall come within his double bridle?
14 Who can open the doors of his face?
[11]Round about his teeth is terror.
15 *His* [12]strong scales are *his* pride,
Shut up together *as with* a close seal.
16 One is so near to another,
That no air can come between them.
17 They are joined one to another;
They stick together, that they cannot be sundered.
18 His neesings flash forth light,
And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.
19 Out of his mouth go burning torches,
And sparks of fire leap forth.
20 Out of his nostrils a smoke goeth,
As of a seething pot and *burning* rushes.
21 His breath kindleth coals,
And a flame goeth forth from his mouth.

22 In his neck abideth strength,
And terror danceth before him.
23 The flakes of his flesh are joined together:
They are firm upon him; they cannot be moved.
24 His heart is as firm as a stone;
Yea, firm as the nether millstone.
25 When he raiseth himself up, the mighty are afraid:
By reason of consternation they are beside themselves.
26 If one lay at him with the sword, it cannot avail;
Nor the spear, the dart, nor the [13]pointed shaft.
27 He counteth iron as straw,
And brass as rotten wood.
28 The [14]arrow cannot make him flee:
Slingstones are turned with him into stubble.
29 Clubs are counted as stubble:
He laugheth at the rushing of the javelin.
30 His underparts are *like* sharp potsherds:
He spreadeth *as it were* a threshing wain upon the mire.
31 He maketh the deep to boil like a pot:
He maketh the sea like ointment.
32 He maketh a path to shine after him;
One would think the deep to be hoary.
33 Upon earth there is not his like,
That is made without fear.
34 He beholdeth every thing that is high:
He is king over all the [15]sons of pride.

[1] That is, *the hippopotamus.* [2] Or, *ribs*
[3] Or, *He that made him hath furnished* him with *his sword*
[4] Or, *be violent* [5] [Ch. 40[25] in Heb.]
[6] That is, *the crocodile.* [7] Heb. *a rope of rushes.*
[8] Or, *spike* [9] [Ch. 41[1] in Heb.]
[10] Heb. *uncover the face of his garment.*
[11] Or, *His teeth are terrible round about*
[12] Or, *courses of scales* Heb. *channels of shields.*
[13] Or, *coat of mail* [14] Heb. *son of the bow.*
[15] See ch. 28[8].

The sections on Behemoth and Leviathan are in all probability additions to the original poem. Since the time of Bochart it has been the generally accepted opinion that Behemoth is to be identified with the hippopotamus, and Leviathan with the crocodile, two Nilotic animals which ancient writers [1] often name together. Some modern critics—notably Gunkel and Zimmern, Cheyne and Toy—have propounded the theory that the beasts

[1] For the references, see *EBi* 2072.

described are not real animals but mythological monsters. Gunkel regards Leviathan as the chaos-dragon, Tiâmat, and Behemoth as Kingu her consort.[1] Cheyne finds in both the descriptions a fusion of Babylonian and Egyptian semi-mythical elements.[2] The older view, however, still commends itself to most scholars. In reference to the crocodile every detail of the description is substantially accurate, and with regard to the hippopotamus only one or two clauses—due apparently either to the writer's imperfect knowledge or to his poetical exaggeration—are difficult to reconcile with the facts.

15 **Behold now behemoth.** The name is an intensive plur. of the ordinary word for beast (בְּהֵמָה), and means 'a colossal animal.' The view long held, that it is the Hebraised form of the Egyptian word for river-ox is now discarded.[3] In Ps 73[22] the *Oxf. Heb. Lex.* (with Hitzig and Delitzsch) reads, 'A behemoth was I with (toward) thee.' If the text [15a] is correct, the meaning seems to be, 'Behold thy strange fellow-creature, which I made **as well as thee.** But the Heb. line is metrically too long, and the LXX (followed by Beer and many others) omits 'which I made.' The meaning is then, Look at this extraordinary animal which is **with thee,** near thee; make it an object-lesson. 'There is nothing' in the whole delineation 'which does not well apply to the hippopotamus: he is herbivorous (v.[15]); he is remarkable for the stoutness of his body (v.[16]); his tail is thick and rigid, and his legs sinewy (v.[17]); his bones are solid (v.[18]); he is the largest animal indigenous in Bible lands; his teeth cut the herbage as with a sword (v.[19]); he comes up out of the water to the plantations to feed; the term *hill* is applicable to low elevations as well as to high, and in the language of poetry could be used of the knolls arising from the general level of the Nile basin (v.[20]); the lotus tree is common, as also reeds and swamps, in the neighbourhood where he dwells (v.[21]); so also the willows by the streams (v.[22]); the allusion to the inundation of Egypt fits his case (v.[23]); his strength is such that a direct attack is hazardous, and the poet challenges the reader to bore his nostrils and lead him with a hook or ring like the ox.'[4] **He**

[1] *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 41–69. [2] *EBi* 519 ff.
[3] *EBi* 1210. [4] G. E. Post, Hastings' *DB* i. 267.

eateth grass as an ox. His food 'consists chiefly of grass and of aquatic plants, of which these animals consume enormous quantities, the stomach being capable of containing from 5 to 6 bushels.'[1]

16 **his strength . . . his force.** 'Of a mild and inoffensive disposition, it seeks to avoid collision with man; when wounded, however, or in defence of its young, it exhibits great ferocity, and native canoes are capsized and occasionally demolished by its infuriated attacks; the bellowing grunt then becoming loud enough to be heard a mile away.'[2]

17 **He moveth his tail like a cedar.** The verb (חָפַץ) is found only here, and means either 'he bends stiffly down,' or simply 'he stiffens.' Wetzstein (in Delitzsch, ii, 359) renders, 'His tail is motionless like the short and thick stem of the cedar.' The simile is not quite apt, for the tail is only a short naked stump, which would scarcely have been compared to a cedar by an accurate observer like the author of chs. 38, 39. Budde thinks that on such a point the writer's memory may easily have deceived him. In any case, the error is an insufficient reason for regarding behemoth as a mythical monster—one of the primeval 'children of failure.'

19 **He is the chief of the ways of God.** The **ways** of God are His creative operations, as in Pr 8^{22}, to which there may be an allusion. The **chief**, or beginning (רֵאשִׁית), may imply that behemoth was the first land animal to be created, an inference perhaps from Gn 1^{24}, where 'cattle' is the translation of *bĕhēmāh* (בְּהֵמָה). More probably it means that he is regarded as God's masterpiece. Reuss renders, 'Il est le chef-d'œuvre de Dieu.' The traditional text of 19^{b} is meaningless, and Budde leaves it a blank. The LXX reads, 'Made that the angels may play with him'! Making slight changes (הָעֹשׂוֹ יִגַּשׁ חַרְבּוֹ into הֶעָשׂוּי נִגְּשׁ חֲבֵרוֹ), many scholars read with Giesebrecht, **Made to be ruler over his fellows**, *i.e.* behemoth is regarded as the king of land animals.

20 **Surely the mountains bring him forth food.** Only the upper reaches of the Nile are skirted by hills, but in poetry mere knolls might be termed 'mountains.' Perhaps there is an

[1] *Ency. Brit.*[11] xiii. 522. [2] *Ib.*

allusion to 'the cattle (*i.e. bĕhēmōth*) upon a thousand hills' (Ps 50[10]). 'Although hippopotamuses do not willingly go far from the water on which their existence depends, they occasionally travel long distances by night in search of food, and in spite of their clumsy appearance are able to climb steep banks and precipitous ravines with ease. Of a wounded hippopotamus which Sir W. Baker saw leaving the water and galloping inland, he writes: "I never could have imagined that so unwieldy an animal could have exhibited such speed."'[1] Instead of **hills** (הָרִים) some suggest 'rivers' (Siegfried reading נְהָרִים and Wright יְאוֹרִים). [20b] gives a good enough sense, indicating that behemoth is in general harmless, and that other beasts may play near him without fear. Duhm, however, changes the playground into a scene of carnage: 'And all the beasts of the field he crushes' (reading not יְשַׂחֲקוּ שָׁם but יִשְׁחַק), and shortening the long line by transferring 'And there' to the beginning of the next verse).

21, 22 **He lieth under the lotus trees.** The **lotus** is not the sacred *Nymphaea Lotus*, but the *Zizyphus Lotus* (thorny lotus) of Linnaeus. 'In Egypt the tree is far stronger and taller than in Syria, where it is seldom more than 24 feet high.'[2] In [22a] the repetition of 'lotus trees' is strange, and the Heb. very doubtful. Duhm proposes, 'The thicket of thorn-bushes (סֹךְ נַעֲצוּצִים) is his shadow.' Merx and Bickell would omit the verse as a repetition of v.[21].

23 **He is confident, though Jordan swell even to his mouth.** As the hippopotamus is not found in Palestine, **Jordan** is to be regarded as an appellative denoting any impetuous, swollen stream: 'a Jordan bursteth forth into his mouth' (*Oxf. Heb. Lex.*). Only in one other place (Ps 42[6]) does the name occur without the article. Budde and Dillmann read 'though it swell,' shortening a too long line by striking out 'Jordan' as a gloss; while Winckler has 'though the Nile (יְאוֹר) swell.' Duhm proposes to shorten the line by taking the last words, 'even to his mouth' (אֶל־פִּיהוּ), into the next line, which is too short, and reading, 'Who is he (מִי הוּא), that will take him?'

[1] *Ency. Brit.*[11] *loc. cit.*

[2] Wetzstein in Delitzsch, ii. 362.

24 **Take him . . . on the watch**: lit. 'take him in his eyes,' which does not give the sense educed from it. Read, 'attack him in the eyes,' which gives a parallel to the next line, 'Or pierce his nose with a snare.' 'As among elephants, so also among hippopotamuses there are "rogues"—old bulls which have become soured in solitude, and are at all times dangerous. Assuming the offensive on every occasion, they attack all and sundry without shadow of provocation; and the natives avoid their haunts, which are usually well known.'[1] Here the description of behemoth ends abruptly, and Duhm thinks that the missing conclusion is to be found in 41^{9-12}.

XLI. 1. **Canst thou draw out leviathan with a fish hook?** In 3^{8} 'leviathan' signifies the celestial dragon which causes eclipses; here, the crocodile, regarded as a monstrous creature that defies capture. The writer is not a natural historian, and his poetical licences and humorous sallies are not to be treated as grave and sober prose. The idea of catching the crocodile with a hook strikes him as ridiculous, but, strangely enough, Herodotus (ii. 70) describes its capture in this very way. A hook baited with a chine of pig was lowered into the river; a live pig was beaten on the bank, and the squeaking brought the crocodile to the bait; drawn ashore, it was blinded with mud and then easily dealt with. At the present day it is still 'caught in various ways,—*e.g.* with two pointed sticks, which are fastened cross-wise within the bait, an animal's entrails, to which is attached a rope. When the creature has swallowed the spiked bait it keeps its jaws so firmly closed that it can be dragged out of the water.'[2] **Or press down his tongue with a cord?** The reference is either to the cord to which the angling-hook is attached, or to a rope passed round the tongue and lower jaw of the animal, after his capture, to lead or drag him about. Herodotus (ii. 68), and after him Aristotle and Pliny, were in error when they said that the crocodile has no tongue.

2 **a rope into his nose**: lit. a rush, hence a cord made of rushes, or spun of rush-fibre. The LXX and Vulg. have 'ring' (*κρίκον, circulum*).

3 **Will he make many supplications . . . speak soft words unto**

[1] *Ency. Brit. loc. cit.* [2] *Ency. Brit.*[11] vii. 478.

thee? The poet is amused at the idea of a captured crocodile begging to be spared, shedding (as we should say) 'crocodile tears.'

4, 5 In the same ironical vein the poet asks if the crocodile can be engaged as a perpetual domestic servant, or made a playmate like a tame bird, or tied to a string (like a pet dog) for the maidens! Chesterton remarks that in this 'admirable passage' the appeal is to the sense of wonder provoked by the grotesque, and he finds the notion of leviathan as a household pet curiously in the spirit of the humour of Browning.[1]

6 **Shall the bands** *of fishermen* **make traffic of him?** The word for **bands** (חַבָּרִים), found only here, means 'partners,' those engaged in the catch (cf. Lk 5[10]). Gunkel prefers the word for 'sailors' (חֹבְלִים, rope-pullers, fishermen). In [6b] the word for merchants is lit. **Canaanites** (cf. Pr 31[24], Is 23[8], Zeph 1[11]).

7 The **barbed irons**, or **fish spears** (both words found only here), doubtless resembled the modern harpoon. Spearing was 'the first and historically the oldest method' of fishing.[2]

8 **Lay thine hand upon him.** The advice is ironical. Try once to catch him, and the memory of the unequal struggle will deter you from repeating the mad attempt. It is possible, as Budde notes, that **Remember** points forward, not backward, meaning, '**Bethink thee** of the coming battle.'

9–12 Many scholars surmise that these verses have been misplaced. Duhm regards them as the conclusion of the description of behemoth, and therefore places them after 40[24]. Merx, Bickell, and Cheyne, taking vv.[9-13] for a divine soliloquy referring not to leviathan but to Job, place them after 31[37]. Ley thinks they are applicable to the crocodile, and lets them stand where they are.

9 **The hope of him is in vain.** Lit. 'His hope,' which in the present position must be rendered 'One's hope'; but this is unusual. 'His hope' reads quite naturally after 40[24].

10 **Who then is he that can stand before me?** *i.e.* before God, the incomparably great. The Targum and some MSS read 'before him.'

[1] *Robert Browning*, p. 152. Chesterton mistakes Behemoth for Leviathan; but that is a detail.

[2] *Ency. Bib.* 1527.

11 The RV correctly translates the Heb., but the sense (cf. Ro 11^{35}) does not at all suit the context. With slight changes many, scholars read, 'Who hath assailed him and prospered? Under the whole heaven not one.'

12 This verse is wanting in the LXX. Budde has blank spaces which indicate that he regards the text as corrupt. With some changes Duhm reads, 'He (the hunter) would not renew his boastings And the talk of mighty deeds and of his fine outfit.'

13 **Who shall come within his double bridle?** *i.e.* his jaws. The LXX and Symmachus, followed by Wright and other modern scholars, have 'his double breastplate' (סִרְיֹנוֹ for רִסְנוֹ), *i.e.* his scales and hide together. This gives a much better parallel to 'his outer garment.'

14 **the doors of his face:** *i.e.* his jaws. Budde unnecessarily changes 'his face' into 'his mouth' (פָּנָיו into פִּיו).

15 ***His* strong scales are *his* pride.** For 'pride' (גַּאֲוָה) the ancient versions have 'his back' (גַּוּה), reading **Rows of shields** (*i.e.* scales) **form his back.** In 15^{b} the LXX rendering is perhaps to be preferred, **His breast is a seal of stone** (סָגְרוֹ חוֹתָם צֹר for סָגוּר חוֹתָם צָר, cf. Jos $5^{2.\ 3}$). The next two verses are wanting in the original LXX.

18 **His neesings flash forth light.** The word for 'neesings' (עֲטִישָׁה) suits the sound to the sense. 'Neeze' is found for 'sneeze' in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, II. i. 56. The crocodile swims rapidly with only the tip of his nose showing, and the vapour he expels is luminous in the sunshine. **And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.** They have a reddish appearance some distance under the surface of the water. In the Egyptian hieroglyphics the crocodile's eyes are a symbol of the dawn.

19, 20 **burning torches . . . a smoke.** The thick, hot steam issusing in columns from his mouth and nostrils looks like fire and smoke. In 20^{b} the Heb. has 'Like a pot seething, and rushes,' but the LXX evidently preserves the true reading, 'Like a seething and boiling pot' (אֹגֶם, 'boiling,' instead of אַגְמוֹן, rushes).

21 Read, **His breath setteth coals ablaze.** It is such hyper-

bolical language that lends a certain plausibility to the theory that leviathan is a fire-breathing dragon.

22 **And terror danceth before him.** The word for **danceth** (דּוּץ), which is found only here, means in Aram. 'to be joyous,' 'to dance for joy.' It is ironically used to describe the convulsive movements of terrified creatures when leviathan suddenly shows his head.

23, 24 **The flakes of his flesh**: lit. the falling, hanging parts (מַפְּלֵי בְשָׂרוֹ, from נָפַל), which in other animals are flabby, but **firm upon him.** The use of 'firm' in three successive lines is very strange. Bickell and Duhm strike out [23b], which the LXX omits, and regard [24a] as a gloss on [24b]. Then [23a] and [24b] form a distich.

25 The word for **By reason of consternation** (מִשְּׁבָרִים) is probably corrupt. Buhl suggests, 'The waves of the sea (מִשְּׁבְרֵי יָם) are beside themselves'; Duhm, 'The watchers' (מִשְׁמָרִים); Giesebrecht, 'At his teeth the mighty' (מִשִּׁנָּיו גִּבּוֹרִים).

26–29 Weapons of every kind—iron, brass, stone, wood —are used against him without avail; a statement broadly true, though the ancient Egyptians sometimes harpooned the crocodile.

30 **He spreadeth** *as it were* **a threshing wain upon the mire.** His scales leave an impression on the mud as if a threshing-board had passed over it. See the pictures of threshing-machines in Hastings' *DB* i. 50, or Mackie's *Bible Manners and Customs*, 40 f.

31 Plunging into the river, fighting a rival in it, or swimming after his prey, the crocodile makes a commotion like boiling water or the foam of the ingredients beaten by a chemist in a pot of ointment. The mighty river Nile was often called **the sea** (יָם, Is 19^5 21^1, Nu 8^8), or 'the deep' (תְּהוֹם, as in the next verse and Ezk $31^{4.15}$).

32 A shining track of hoary foam marks the crocodile's way through the river. The Greeks called the sea hoary, πολιῆς ἐπὶ θινὶ θαλάσσης, *Il.* iv. 248.

33 **Upon earth there is not his like.** The word for 'his like' (מָשְׁלוֹ) may with a different pointing (מֹשְׁלוֹ) mean 'his ruler,' which gives a good enough sense, but the text is preferable.

34 'He beholdeth every thing that is high.' Far better, **every thing that is high feareth him** (יִרְאֶה for יִרְאֵהוּ). The words for 'seeing' and 'fearing' were often confused. **Made without fear** (v.[33]), leviathan inspires fear in every other creature. **He is king over all the sons of pride**, *i.e.* the proud beasts of prey (28[9]). Leviathan is crowned. There is no need to read, with the LXX and Syriac, 'king over all creeping things' (שֹׁרֵץ instead of שַׁחַץ).

XLII. 1–6.

PERSONAL COMMUNION WITH GOD.

1 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,
2 I know that thou canst do all things,
And that no purpose of thine can be restrained.
3 [1]Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?
Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not,
Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.
4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak;
[2]I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.
5 I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;
But now mine eye seeth thee,
6 Wherefore I [3]abhor *myself*, and repent
In dust and ashes.

[1] See ch. 38[2]. [2] See chs. 38[3] 40[7]. [3] Or, *loathe* my words

Job receives something better than a reading of the scroll of his mysterious fate. From the dark and narrow field of personal experience he is led into a vast cosmos which is luminous with God. Whether another and more wonderful God is revealed to him, or he attains a deeper and more sympathetic insight into the mind and character of God, he can scarcely tell. What he does know is that, though his suffering is neither removed nor explained, God has come to him not as a Foe but as a Friend. He had formerly thought that prosperity was the token of God's favour and adversity of His displeasure; he now knows that a man may suffer the loss of all things and yet be sure of the love of God. His traditional faith proved unequal to the shock of calamity, but he has now that support in trial which was given to

some of the Psalmists and Prophets (Ps 73^{23}, Hab 3^{17}), that sense of God's goodness which is the inspiration of an all-conquering faith. He distinguishes his new from his old conception of God by saying that he had formerly heard of Him, but now his eyes have seen Him. His doubts are dispelled, his spiritual wounds are healed. He is content to take his place in the great scheme of things, patiently doing and bearing the will of God. He is at once satisfied and awed into silence. If he utters no words of triumph, if he is not yet equal to hallelujahs, he has found the perfect peace of the mind that is stayed on God. In his final attitude to life there is a singular blending of rapture and pain,—the rapture of the consciousness of God, the pain of self-knowledge,—but the pain only increases the rapture, for it is an ever-renewed call to that repentance which brings the spirit into ever deeper harmony with God.

XL. 4 **Behold, I am of small account** (see p. 333). While this great soul is rising to his full stature in communion with a God of righteousness and goodness, what he is conscious of is not his greatness but his littleness. Looking at himself in the light of that universe which his very greatness of soul has enabled him in some measure to appreciate, he sinks in his own esteem into an insignificance which he has neither the imagination to measure nor the words to express. **What shall I answer thee?** It is conceivable that Job might still press the old perplexing questions, but he has now no desire to do so. Is it, then, his will or his heart that makes him thus strangely silent? Some find nothing more in his refusal to answer than a dogged submission to authority, a sad acceptance of the inevitable, an acquiescence similar to that of Ecclesiastes. 'Job, if he is not satisfied, submits. Henceforth he will be mute.'[1] This interpretation, however, fails to do justice to God's vital contact with the soul, whose doubts are fused in the white heat of a spiritual fellowship. It is an impulse from the heart that brings Job's hand to his lips. 'The silence with which he meets the divine revelation is the silence of satisfaction, even though this be mingled with awe.'[2] 'Humility, the highest human quality, affirms by its self-renunciation and its voluntary, reverent self-sacrifice the great and sublime reality of God and our own

[1] *Mark Rutherford*, 299. [2] Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 54.

insignificance. . . . In this feeling of humility we are equally far removed from the proud and titanic self-assertion of the ego, and from all sad and inconsolable resignation.'[1]

5 **and I will not answer.** The occurrence of 'answer' in the previous verse casts suspicion on the text. Changing a single letter (אֶעֱנֶה into אֶשְׁנֶה), most scholars read, 'Once have I spoken, but I will not do so again.' This gives an excellent parallel to 5b 'Yea twice, but I will proceed no further.'

XLII. 2–6 V.3a is to be struck out as a marginal quotation (38[2]) which has found its way into the text. V.4, in which the second line is a quotation from 38[3], is also to be removed as an unintelligent reader's insertion. There remain two very fine quatrains.

2 **I know that thou canst do all things.** This is no longer a recognition of God's arbitrary omnipotence. It does not now mean, 'Thou canst do as Thou wilt, and never give an account of Thy doings,' but rather, 'Thou canst make the innocent suffer, yet he knows Thou art just and good.' The power of an enemy affrights a sufferer, that of a friend consoles him.

3 **Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not, Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.** Job has discovered that there are questions in reference to which agnosticism is a virtue and dogmatism a sin. In his eagerness to solve the enigmas of his life, he has put forward hypotheses as if they were ascertained truths; he has charged God with injustice when he should have charged himself with ignorance; he has confidently pronounced judgment on things beyond his comprehension. But the vision of God has made him intellectually humble. He now acknowledges that things are far more wonderful than he has ever realised. Henceforth, instead of trying to explain all mysteries, he will recognise that it may be an act of piety towards God and of charity towards men to leave not a few of them unexplained.

5 **But now mine eye seeth thee.** Having gained an immediate experience of a higher and greater God, Job feels that he has hitherto had but a second-hand, traditional faith. He has now transcended the religion of hearsay with that of vision.

[1] Bousset, *Faith of a Modern Protestant*, 26.

The strongest testimony of other men is weak in comparison with personal evidence, whether of sense or soul. True religion is autoptic, experimental; it supersedes all doubtful reports with a consciousness of God as real as the knowledge of one's own existence.

6 **Wherefore I abhor** *myself.* In the Heb. text the object is unexpressed. The marg. is better, 'I loathe *my words*,' though loathe is perhaps too strong a term. **I retract** (or **repudiate**) *my words* is the meaning. Job is not ashamed to change his opinions, but he is profoundly ashamed of the opinions which he changes. Read, **I repent upon dust and ashes.** This was a mark of grief and penitence. One who was fasting spread sackcloth and ashes under him (Is 58[5]; cf. Jon 3[6], reading 'on' for 'in'). After 31[40] somebody has interpolated the line, 'The words of Job are ended.' If they had really been ended at that point, our whole conception of him would have been different, and he would have been no true model for ordinary erring humanity. But after having said many things as a sufferer, he speaks his last words as a sinner whose heart is full of penitential sorrow. He now takes his place among all those men—some of them the purest and noblest of mankind[1]—who, having received a vision of the glory of God, have been suddenly overwhelmed with a sense of their own unworthiness (*e.g.* Is 6[5], Ezk 1[28], Dn 10[8], and cf. Lk 5[8], Rev 1[17]).

> 'And these two pains, so counter and so keen,—
> The longing for Him, when thou seest Him not;
> The shame of self at thought of seeing Him,—
> Will be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.'[2]

XLII. 7–17.

RESTORATION.

7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have

[1] In the beginning of the *Systema Naturæ* Linnæus says: 'Deum sempiternum, immensum, omniscium, omnipotentem, expergefactus transeuntem vidi, et obstupui.' (Quoted by Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, ii. p. x.)

[2] Newman, *The Dream of Gerontius.*

not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. 8 Now therefore, take unto you seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept, that I deal not with you after your folly; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: and the LORD accepted Job. 10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: and the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. 11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him concerning all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a [1]piece of money, and every one a ring of gold. 12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: and he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. 13 He had also seven sons and three daughters. 14 And he called the name of the first, Jemimah; and the name of the second, Keziah; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch. 15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. 16 And after this Job lived an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even* four generations. 17 So Job died, being old and full of days.

[1] Heb. *kešitah.*

It is not quite easy to grasp the lessons of the prose Epilogue, which not a few readers cannot help regarding as a kind of bathos. If the author of the Drama believes that his hero's restoration to health and prosperity is demanded in the interests of justice, if he feels that God would not be sufficiently glorified by the sufferer's peaceful and triumphant death, if he conceives the idea of rewarding the patriarch with as many sons and daughters, and twice as many sheep and oxen, as he had before, then the poet's theoretical position is after all not essentially different from that of the three utilitarian friends who were the representatives of orthodoxy. Such a view may safely be set aside. Froude finds in the passage a higher, more idealistic doctrine. 'Prosperity, enjoyment, happiness, comfort,

peace, whatever be the name by which we designate that state in which life is to our own selves pleasant and delightful, as long as they are sought or prized as things essential, so far have a tendency to disennoble our nature, and are a sign that we are still in servitude to selfishness. Only when they lie outside us, as ornaments merely to be worn or laid aside as God pleases—only then may such things be possessed with impunity. Job's heart in early times had clung to them more than he knew, but now he was purged clean, and they were bestowed because he had ceased to need them.' The writer of the Drama would doubtless have approved of this teaching, but the Epilogue probably owes its place in his poem to another consideration. As an essential part of the old Folk-tale, it could not be discarded. To have made the hero die in leprosy would have been too audacious a contradiction of what may have been a well-authenticated tradition. 'For the idea of the book as a whole,' says Smend (502), 'the Epilogue signifies absolutely nothing. The poet could have no interest in showing that the suffering of the saint might end with his deliverance. We cannot suppose that he would have made this concession to poetic justice. He takes things too seriously for that. Thus the restoration of Job can only be explained by the fact that the poet's hands were tied by the traditional form of the Job Saga.' The poet's acceptance of this conclusion may be regarded as signifying that it was not his mission to deny the general tendency of righteousness to produce prosperity, but only to prove that the tendency was far from being invariable or inevitable.

7, 8 **the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite.** The words spoken by Jahweh in these two verses can scarcely have been written by the poet. In the Dialogues the three friends are zealous for the honour of God, and their mistakes are not of a kind to convict them of the moral offence described as **folly**, and thereby to stir the divine **wrath** against them. Nor would God have made the rectitude of Job's words (which Job himself learned in the end to abhor) a reason for giving him the privilege of acting as priestly intercessor for his friends. It seems probable, therefore, that the central part of the ancient Saga presented Job and his friends in another light—Job bowing without a murmur to the will of Heaven, and the friends talking

'folly,' somewhat like that ascribed to Job's wife, about the ways of God. The poet finds it possible to retain the old ending of the Saga, but puts a different meaning into it. In his view the Job of the Dialogues, as well as the Job of the Prologue, has spoken **the thing that is** essentially **right**, while the friends, for all their good intentions, have spoken what is radically wrong. Amid all the murmurings and questionings of doubt, Job has been resolutely groping his way towards a reconciling view of divine love and justice, and the traditionalists who have stood aghast at his vehement and rebellious words have been less pleasing to God than the agonised sufferer whose faith though shaken has never been shattered. God prefers the honest doubt of the earnest seeker after truth to the zeal of the orthodox believer whose faith has never been tried because he has been afraid to look into the dark mysteries of existence.

8 **offer up for yourselves a burnt offering** (עוֹלָה). This was the oldest form of blood-offering. In the Priestly Code it is the sin-offering (חַטָּאת), with the he-goat as victim, which atones. **that I deal not with you after your folly.** Lit. 'lest I do foolishness to you,' *i.e.* deal out to you disgrace, expose and punish you as fools, because of your utterances about me (*Oxf. Heb. Lex.*). The LXX has 'lest I destroy you.' It is probable that the following words, 'for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath,' are a mere dittograph of the end of v.[7].

10 **turned the captivity**: better, 'turned the fortunes' (שְׁבִית or שְׁבוּת being from שׁוּב rather than from שָׁבָה), *i.e.* removed the afflictions and restored the prosperity; a phrase which may quite well have been pre-exilic, though it gained a special currency after the Restoration.

11 **a piece of money.** The *kĕsîtah* (קְשִׂיטָה), which was perhaps an uncoined silver piece of a certain weight, belonged to those patriarchal times which the writer tries to reproduce (Gn 33^{19}, Jos 24^{32}). As a small piece of money and a nose-ring or ear-ring from each of Job's friends would not go far to restore his fortune, the gifts were merely congratulatory. For 'a *kesitah* and every one a ring of gold,' Cheyne would read 'a Carchemish mina of gold' (*EBi* 2659).

13, 14 While Job's former possessions are doubled, he has the same number of children as before. One of the three daughters was called 'Dove' (Jemimah, יְמִימָה), another 'Cassia' (קְצִיעָה), while the third had the curious name 'Horn of Eye-paint' (קֶרֶן הַפּוּךְ), which Cheyne, doubting if such an expression could be applied to 'one of Job's ideal daughters,' wishes to change into 'Scent of Apples' (רֵיחַ תַּפּוּחִים) (*EBi* 2659).

15 **and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.** The post-exilic law permitted daughters to inherit only when there was no son (Nu 27[1-11]).

16 *even* **four generations.** To make up the four we have either to count Job's father or to suppose that 'and their sons' has dropped out of the text at the end of the verse.

17 **being old and full of days.** Cornill bases his opinion as to the date of the book principally upon these words, which he regards as borrowed from the Priestly Code (see Gn 35[29]). But the phrase may well have been a popular expression. The LXX adds, 'And it is written that he (Job) will rise again with those whom the Lord raiseth up.'

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